

School of Theology at Claremont



10011433750

CHURCHES

STAND FOR

Being a Series of Seven Lectures

BY

E. G. SELWYN, M.A.

CLEMENT F. ROGERS, M.A.

A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.

C. RYDER SMITH, B.A., D.D.

EDWARD GRUBB, M.A.

P. T. THOMSON, M.A.

D. C. MACGREGOR, M.A., D.D.

WITH A PREFACE BY A LAYMAN

BR

744

W483

1922

HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

NEW YORK EDINBURGH GLASGOW COPENHAGEN

MUMBAI CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI

CHENNAI CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI

26a

Se49w



The Library
of the
School of Theology
at Claremont

1325 North College Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711-3199
1/800-626-7820

BR
744
W483
1922

WHAT THE CHURCHES STAND FOR

Being a Series of Seven Lectures

BY

E. G. SELWYN, M.A. CLEMENT F. ROGERS, M.A.
A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D. C. RYDER SMITH, B.A., D.D.
EDWARD GRUBB, M.A. P. T. THOMSON, M.A.
D. C. MACGREGOR, M.A., D.D.

WITH A PREFACE BY A LAYMAN

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW COPENHAGEN
NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPE TOWN
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI

1922

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

BY FREDERICK HALL

303.100 Anderson
Y8A881

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	5
By HUBERT ORD, M.A.	
CIRCULAR LETTER OF INVITATION SENT OUT BY THE COMMITTEE WHO ORGANIZED THE LECTURES .	9
LECTURE	
I. THE GENERAL CATHOLIC POSITION .	II
By the Rev. E. G. SELWYN, M.A. (Rector of Redhill, Havant).	
II. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND . . .	31
By the Rev. CLEMENT F. ROGERS, M.A. (Professor of Liturgical and Pastoral Theo- logy, King's College, London).	
III. CONGREGATIONALISM	49
By the Rev. ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D. (Principal of New College, London).	
IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM	59
By the Rev. C. RYDER SMITH, B.A., D.D. (Tutor in Systematic Theology, Richmond College).	
V. THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS	69
By EDWARD GRUBB, M.A. (of Letchworth).	

LECTURE	PAGE
VI. THE BAPTISTS	93
By the Rev. P. T. THOMSON, M.A. (of Hampstead).	
VII. PRESBYTERIANISM	102
By the Rev. D. C. MACGREGOR, M.A., D.D. (of Wimbledon, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England).	

PREFACE

BY A LAYMAN

HOPE for the race, hope in an Eternal Goodness, has been a priceless possession of mankind for countless ages and among all peoples—faint, no doubt, often, but always existing. As early as 400 B.C. Euripides sang :

We may marvel. Yet I trust,
When man seeketh to be just
And to pity them that wander,
God will raise him from the dust.

(Translated from the *Alcestis* by Gilbert Murray.)

These first months of 1922 are especially a time of hope in many ways, material and spiritual : a time when our nation and other nations of the earth are carrying out epoch-making decisions in the cause of Peace.

The lectures of which this volume consists may be said to appear at a very favourable moment, and may well fall into the hands of readers of all kinds of mental outlook in many parts of the Empire.

Many there are who will be familiar with the topics treated, and aware at least of some of the views and opinions set forth, though they are hardly likely to have seen them brought together in such happy juxtaposition.

There may be, however, some who, not conversant with religious thought, on a first glance at the titles or subject-matter of these lectures, will experience something of that bewilderment which Keats expressed on first looking into Chapman's Homer :

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies,
When a new planet swims into his ken,

and this feeling may prevent their realizing what practical help a book like this may be to them in their ordinary lives.

There may be others, too, who, out of general interest, will like to hear to what audience the lectures were delivered, and what was the origin of the movement which brought them about, with a few particulars as to their organization.

Among various religious movements in the south of London, a society was established for mutual discussion of spiritual outlook and ethics, which, after holding many interesting meetings, decided to organize public lectures. A committee was formed, but it was regretted that the Roman Catholic community, though invited, would not participate.

A circular letter, which is given below, was drafted. The ministers of most churches in the neighbourhood consented to act as local centres for enlistment of members.

The meetings were held once a week in the hall of one of the churches, kindly offered by the managers at the first occasion, when a smaller hall used for secular purposes proved not to be large enough. The lectures were presided over by the Rev. W. Hume Campbell, Principal of St. Christopher's College for the Training of Sunday School Teachers, while the Bishop of Woolwich occupied the chair at the first session. A remarkable feature was the size of the audience, which surprised the organizers, averaging about 400 for each of the lectures. It was noteworthy for its representative character, every class and age in the neighbourhood being in evidence. Owing to the numbers and to a desire to avoid controversy, discussion afterwards could not be allowed, but several poignant questions showed that deep feeling had been stirred.

An adequate impression of the effect of this hall full of intent and earnest people cannot be given in words, but an effort to imagine it should be made. For since, as Sir Arthur Balfour, in *Theism and Humanism*, well says, 'Aesthetic values are in fact dependent upon a spiritual conception of the world we live in,' so must the converse be true, that we shall be better able to conceive the spiritual world by realizing its aesthetic setting.

The hall being the stage, the audience (paradoxically)

the actors, and their relation to the lectures being the action, to what happy ending will the drama be brought ?

Will these lectures, stating so clearly the spiritual positions of the various churches, tend to bring about a union between them ? Would such a union be desirable in itself ? These are not questions for the present writer to attempt to discuss.

Perhaps we may adopt, or at least in our uncertainty consider, the aesthetic view (once more), and liken the beauty of the Truth of God to a diamond, which one can only comprehend by regarding it from different angles—each facet, though separate, yet contributing to the complete beauty of the whole. However this may be, a true comprehension of the positions of our comrade denominations may well help us to agree in a common faith in which to combat the prevailing evils of the world.

Millions of Englishmen realize the power of these evils—drunkenness, wickedness, sweating, and so forth—and yet, though eager to suppress them, do not clearly see the antidote. With regard to one of the greatest of these abuses, the employment of violence as a remedy for disagreements, there are some glorious indications of a recognition that a better way of settlement is by compromise, sacrifice, and charity. The difficulty in securing the settlement of great questions upon these principles has always been the absence of the all-compelling atmosphere created by the practice of these principles that should exist in the many millions who form the foundation of democratic life in the various communities or nations concerned. Surely it is often due to the fact that these millions—the men and women in the street, in the workshop, the counting-house, in the professions—have kept themselves outside, apart from any spiritual organization and comradeship, whereby they might be aided to practise them, and have failed to appreciate that fellowship, compromise, sacrifice, love, are the cardinal bases of the teaching of the Church of Christ under whatever denomination it is made manifest.

Such failure of realization has too often come about from lack of understanding, from inability of the individual to find that satisfaction of his needs, the particular

arrangement of ideas that would appeal to his particular case. Christ has been truly called 'The Good Physician'; for particular cases there are surely particular remedies.

In this book are stated with outstanding clearness and with burning conviction the beliefs which should fulfil every aspiration of English-speaking people, beliefs for which Englishmen during hundreds of years have suffered and died, beliefs which Englishmen in all parts of the world share with the glorious band of those who have gone before, of whom Christ was the First: beliefs which extend to those who hold them the hope of a fellowship, a comradeship human and divine, which shall never pass away.

HUBERT ORD.

CIRCULAR LETTER OF INVITATION SENT OUT
BY THE COMMITTEE WHO ORGANIZED THE
LECTURES.

BLACKHEATH, S.E.

August 1921.

THERE is general agreement among all those who call themselves followers of Jesus Christ that the hope of recovery and progress rests with the growth in the world of the spirit of fellowship and co-operation; and more than this, that our modern life in all its aspects must be brought into conformity with the life and teaching of Jesus, the revealer of the true nature of God and of man. And it is recognized that the Church, whose duty it is to witness of Christ in the world, is crippled by the lack of fellowship and mutual understanding within the body of Christ's disciples.

Proposals for Reunion have been made. Their consideration will take much time and thought, and we do not desire to discuss them here. We who write this letter, however, are convinced that the way either to formal reunion or to fellowship and co-operation of any sort between Christians of different denominations must be through mutual understanding. This is the prerequisite of any real coming together. We need to know not only how much we believe and practise in common, but also what is distinctive and characteristic in the faith and worship of the different denominations; to appreciate, in the words of the Lambeth Conference, 'the rich elements of truth, liberty, and life' which rightly belong to the whole fellowship, but which each Communion tends to keep to itself.

Feeling this, the undersigned have joined in the endeavour to secure in our own neighbourhood a humble contribution towards that mutual understanding, of the lack of which in ourselves as in others we are conscious. Arrangements have been made for a course of lectures on

Monday evenings in October and November next on the characteristic doctrine and form of worship of Christian denominations. The lectures will not be in any way of a controversial nature, they will not aim at showing the superiority of one Communion over another, but will simply endeavour to enable Christians of different denominations to understand one another's belief and its form of expression.

(Signed)

W. WOOLWICH.

F. H. BARTLAM (Vicar of Holy Trinity, Lee).

T. W. CRAFER (Incumbent of St. Germain's, Blackheath).

F. GOLDSMITH FRENCH (Minister of Lee Chapel).

ARTHUR HANCOCK (Minister of Lee United Methodist Church).

H. J. HUTCHINSON.

I. M. JONES (Minister of Blackheath Congregational Church).

HUBERT ORD.

C. J. PALMER (Vicar of All Saints', Blackheath).

R. CECIL ROBERTS (Minister of Vanbrugh Park Presbyterian Church).

H. SPENCER (Minister-designate of Blackheath Wesleyan Church).

CECIL M. WEEKS (Minister of Blackheath Wesleyan Church).

H. E. WHATELY (Vicar of St. Michael and All Angels', Blackheath).

I

THE GENERAL CATHOLIC POSITION

BY THE REV. E. G. SELWYN, M.A.

Rector of Redhill, Havant

You will not, I am sure, think that I am voicing any conventional modesty when I say that I quail before the task which you have assigned to me in this initial lecture of your course. You have assigned it to me presumably because you believe that I shall speak of it *con amore*; and, while that is true, it affords at the same time the measure of my misgiving. For I know that what I love is so far beyond my powers of apprehension, still more of exposition or vindication, that to essay the task at all seems to involve the risk of infidelity. If I set my hand to it, it is in the spirit of St. Augustine's prayer: 'Domine Deus, quaecumque dixi de tuo, agnoscant et tui; si qua de meo, et tu ignosce et tui.'¹

A survey of your programme seems to suggest not only that you are interested in Christian Reunion, but that you believe its basis to lie peculiarly in the sphere of Catholic ideals. The universality which the word 'Catholic' denotes, and the stress which Catholic Christianity has always laid upon the Unity of the Church, afford an adequate ground for that belief. It would have been possible to have placed this subject last on your agenda, and to have asked some one, who had heard or read all the papers, to gather up into one synthetic statement the positive contributions which each made to the achievement of future Unity. Perhaps you will yet decide to do this. But meanwhile what I think you desire is rather an analytical treatment of Catholicism; such a survey of that vast treasure-house

¹ 'O Lord God, if aught of my words be of Thee, may Thine own people also acknowledge it: if aught be of mine own, do Thou and Thine pardon it.'

of man's spiritual life as may indicate vital principles of abiding force which are already functioning, under whatever disguises, wherever Christ is named.

And this is a treatment which is at once more possible and more needed to-day than at any time within living memory. It is more possible, because the war and its harvest of problems have made it natural to us to think internationally. Not only has comradeship in arms given us a new respect for the Latin races, but we are learning more and more that the restoration of prosperity in trade and finance and the possibilities of extending culture depend upon the co-operation of men of different blood, temper, and traditions. This fining down of the edges of our insularity is inevitably reacting upon religion and religious thought. We cannot be blind to the fact, for example, that the centres of stability and reconstructive work in Italy and Germany are at the moment the political parties in those countries which have a definitely Catholic allegiance. We cannot ignore the magnificent moral work and witness of the Church in many parts of France. Nor can we forget that Protestantism in Germany seems to have shared the downfall of the Hohenzollerns. The impact of these facts in purging our minds of prejudice has been immense. We might describe it perhaps by saying that whereas before the war most people thought of the folk in France and Italy as Roman Catholics, now they think of them as fellow Christians; and that is no less than a spiritual revolution. No doubt they are under a form of jurisdiction which we cannot accept; but that is no more than the Independent believes about me as a member of an Established Church, or I believe about him as belonging to an autonomous congregation. Yet we agree in recognizing the fruits of the Spirit beneath the suspect jurisdictions; and this recognition has now, I believe, by popular voice been extended to the Catholics of the Roman obedience.

Again, the analytical treatment of Catholicism is not only made more possible by the solution of prejudices; it is also imperatively called for by the needs of Christian apologetic. A generation ago it was said in certain

circles that science could abandon its wordy warfare with religion, because in time it would prove to have explained religion away. To-day there emerge movements of thought which look as though they had come to redeem that claim. The application of the principles of the New Psychology to Comparative Religion, backed as it may be by the thoroughgoing Immanentism of Gentile and Croce, seems to exhibit religion as simply an activity of the human spirit, unrelated to any transcendent reality, and of no consequence for truth; while at the same time the way is open for the return of a pagan anarchy in morals. This is a form of attack to which all the known types of Christianity are equally vulnerable; and no attempt to save Protestant types by jettisoning Catholic types could have any hope of success. When all is said and done, their respective attitudes towards Prayer and Grace, towards the Bible, and towards the moral law, are too alike to permit of any such distinction lasting long. They stand or fall together. And that being so, Catholicism is likely to prove the mainstay of the defence. For it represents, of the two, far the larger and more varied accumulation of spiritual experience, far the closer and more continuous integration of that experience with thought, whether critical or metaphysical, and also a power of assimilating and transfiguring the natural and the sensuous which shows that it is no mere 'enclave' in the mental activity of mankind.

One of the most arresting features of Catholicism is the importance it attaches to a scale of values which cuts right across that adumbrated by Aristotle when he defined man as 'a political animal'. As Baron von Hügel puts it, 'What concerns us here is not the Supernatural in its contrast and conflict with sin and sinful human nature; but the Supernatural as distinct from healthy nature, and the inter-aid and yet tension at work between them.'¹ The civic or political virtues—family loyalty, honesty, public spirit, sexual morality—are anterior to the Christian ethic, and have survived and could survive without it, though no doubt the

Christian faith gives to them a new sanction and a new end.¹ But in Catholic Christianity a quite peculiar emphasis is laid, and successfully laid, upon qualities and ends which are unknown to, or even repudiated by, those whose scale of values is determined by considerations of natural citizenship only. I say 'in Catholic Christianity', and for this reason. It is not that they have not been stressed, and successfully stressed, in Protestantism: the days when Nonconformists were persecuted are full of evidence to the contrary. But, since those days ended, Protestantism has not shown, as Catholicism has, a marked and universal tendency to subordinate its system and methods to the protection and the production of the peculiar values of the Supernatural Life. On the other hand, it is precisely this which accounts for the Catholic doctrine of the Saints, for its practice of canonization, and for the persistent encouragement of the Religious Life. Catholicism, in fact, has shown its sense of the centrality of its scale of values by a method which we more and more recognize to-day as an indication of sincerity: it has specialized on them. It is possible that Evangelical Christianity, which has only been free to develop during the last few generations, will make similar provision as time passes. It is arguable, and on good grounds, that their readiness to suffer persecution in times past was an irrefragable proof of the store they set upon the Christian values. Martyrdom is in itself a form, and a very impressive form, of spiritual and moral specialization. It is significant that the Religious Life, as we know it to-day—that is to say, the conventual method—did not arrive until the early Church had established its claim to live as against persecuting paganism, a fact suggesting that it provides for instincts which were satisfied by martyrdom in other times. Be that as it may, Catholicism, by its encouragement of the Religious Life, does bear a witness not borne in comparable degree to-day by Protestantism to the specific Christian values; and however justly we may detect abuses and errors in the methods employed to

¹ De Quincey's essay on 'Christianity as an Organ of Political Movement' is instructive in this connexion.

encourage it, the evidence as to the primacy of certain ends and values is not thereby materially impaired.

And what are these values? I am tempted to acquit myself of an attempt to answer by referring again to Baron von Hügel's article quoted above, where he illustrates them with poignant vividness under the seven heads of Courage, Purity, Magnanimous Compassion, Humility, Truthfulness, Self-abandonment to God, and Spiritual Joy. Certainly I cannot improve on what he has said. But perhaps one or two points may be underlined. Humility, for instance, is the root of a group of qualities—meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, patience, self-effacement, and the preferring of others to ourselves—which are not only fundamental to Christian ethics, but are also peculiarly difficult, or even repugnant, to the natural man. Aristotle, for example, does not hesitate to regard a low estimate of oneself as evidence of little-mindedness. The high-minded man, he says, when he receives high honour from good men, will feel pleasure, though in a moderate degree, for he knows that he is obtaining his due, or rather, less than his due, but still the best it is in their power to give, and as such he is willing to accept it.¹ The temper is common enough, but perhaps an example may not be amiss. It is in an Irish writer's description of Larne, in Ulster, and it shall tell its own tale:

'And I saw a monument standing at the water-gate of Larne, the entrance to the harbour, built in the form of an Irish round tower beside which the mail-packets pass on their way to and from Scotland; and I discovered that this monument was not a religious monument, that there was no mystery connected with it, that it was not erected to a cardinal, or a politician, or an orator, or a disturber of the peace, but that it was a monument put up by Mr. Chaine, of Larne, at his own expense, to perpetuate his own memory in his native town, to the advancement of which he had devoted his time, his labours, and his money generously. And I was shown on the hillside overlooking this monument the place where the remains of Mr. Chaine lie, gazing down in

¹ *Eth. Nicom.* iv. iii.

spirit upon the harbour of Larne, which was the crowning glory of his life. And then I looked up at the top of the hill where his son lives, honoured by his townsmen, both for his own and for his father's sake, and I said to myself, *That is practical patriotism; the spirit of Mr. Chaine explains why Larne is prosperous.* It explains why Antrim is so superior to the Catholic counties in other parts of Ireland.' ¹

It is on precisely such a spirit as this that our Lord makes comment, when He says: 'I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' ²

'God only.' The 'onliness' of God is the correlative of humility towards men; and it is as marked a feature of the Catholic ideal. The Old Testament had spoken of the Divine 'jealousy'; there must be no coquetting with other gods. The 'onliness' of God is a development from this and entails far more exacting demands. 'Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Luke xii. 29-31). 'If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke xiv. 26). And so St. Paul too: 'Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ' (Phil. iii. 8). Face these passages and others like them in all their naked crudity, and you must admit that they represent a scale of values which is not of earthly mould. They may be impracticable for

¹ *Priests and People*, by Michael McCarthy, p. 80. The author asserts that he is a Roman Catholic.

² St. John v. 42-4.

most of us, except by compromise ; but at least the Religious Life, which exists to take them literally, guarantees as nothing else does that their original force shall not be obscured or lost.

Now this scale of values and the qualities in which it is embodied I have spoken of as 'supernatural'. It is the word which Baron von Hügel uses, and of recent years it has become almost a watchword in Catholic theology. What does it denote? Partly, no doubt, it denotes precisely that contrast which is felt to exist between the Christian ethic and the ethic of Mr. Chaine of Larne, and any others who set up monuments in their own honour. It is supra-natural because it is supra-civic. But the word carries a deeper meaning still—namely, that these motives, qualities, tempers, are no mere efflorescence of the human spirit, but are the gifts, fruits, energies, of the Spirit of God. They are the authentic footprints of God in action. Without this conviction as to the operation of the Holy Spirit, Catholicism, with its fertile constructive confidence, its widely branching theological development, its use of liturgical forms, its doctrine of sacraments, is simply unintelligible. To say that Sanctity has flourished in spite of the system or environment which has, in fact, nursed it is surely to advance an irrational plea. The place which Catholic Christianity explicitly assigns to the Holy Spirit in such crucial experiences as Consecration and Ordination, testifies to a belief which does at least make sense of the phenomena of Church History and enable us to regard it as a continuous process.

It is important, however, to bear in mind a consideration which very closely affects the problem. That consideration is the hiddenness of the Holy Spirit's working. God acts in Him mainly on and through what we now call the Unconscious. In great moments of corporate or individual exaltation we do, no doubt, feel His power ; but more normally we discern Him by His effects or fruits. Faith hoists its sail and catches a breeze, which moves the ship but never fans the cheek. Perhaps we may find here the solution of an age-long misunderstanding. The tendency of Protestantism, or at least of Evangelicalism, has been to look to the sudden, the

catastrophic, and the abnormal for the manifestation of the Spirit, and to think that where this is absent the Spirit is absent : and the strange happenings at Pentecost and Corinth in the first age of the Church are adduced to justify the view. Catholicism is fully at home with these things, but does not count on them. It assumes, indeed, that the changed conception of the Holy Spirit which we notice on turning from St. Paul or St. Luke to St. John, answers to another, but no less real, dispensation of Providence, and believes that the true *locus classicus* of the theology of the Spirit is to be found there. At the same time Catholic thought may well bear the larger part of the responsibility for the misunderstanding. It is often said, and by scholars of wide esteem, that the Chalcedonian definition marks the bankruptcy of patristic thought.¹ There is much in the criticism. But the reason commonly given for it I believe to be mistaken. The reason commonly given is that it wound the Person of Christ in the ceremonies of sterile and obsolete formulae. I believe the true reason to be far more that it did not provide for, or lead to, any development in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, indeed, the time for it was not yet. Perhaps it is only to-day, when the psychology and philosophy of spirit are coming into their own, that fresh knowledge in this field is to be won. Of this, at any rate, I am convinced, that, whether we seek a strong apologetic against unbelief or a real measure of Reunion among Christians, it is in connexion with the Holy Spirit that we shall find it. Catholic and Protestant have common ground there to start from ; and they share alike in the opportunities of formulation which the latest developments of modern thought provide.

We may survey this belief in the Holy Spirit in three regions, in particular, of Catholic thought and practice.

1. There is, first, the tradition of the Scriptures. It might seem superfluous to dwell on a feature in Catholic tradition which is so widely accepted outside as well as within that tradition. I do not think so : for, in fact,

¹ The relevant portion of this definition is quoted in a note at the end of this paper, see p. 30.

what is meant by acceptation? It is of the essence of all Catholic and all Evangelical religion that it is thoroughly and happily at home with the Bible. The ground of this is the belief that it is in a unique degree inspired of God. No doubt a higher degree of authority attaches to the New Testament than to the Old, if only because in the case of the New Testament the canon was not taken over virtually as a whole from past generations, but was built up by the selective activity of the Church, book by book, during the early centuries. The inspiration of the New Testament, that is to say, has vindicated itself in face of a far more searching criticism than that of the Old. But, as the Marcionite controversy showed, the Church appeals to, and carries with it, the Scriptures entire. It is prepared to revise, as it has constantly revised in the past, its modes of interpretation—to find allegory where before it found history, development where before there seemed finality, symbolism where once the letter had seemed to suffice. But what it is not prepared to do is to understand special passages of Scripture in such a way as to make whole books of the Bible mischievous and misleading. That, I believe, is the issue with which Modernism is confronting the Church to-day.

The claim is often made that the same liberty of criticism should be conceded in the New Testament as has for long been granted in the Old. I accept the claim, but on terms, and terms which are applicable to both. The first relates to the necessary limitations of the comparative method. That method is the foundation of biblical criticism, as any reader of Robertson Smith or any student of the Synoptic Problem knows well. But *ex hypothesi* it cannot deal with incomparables. It can compare the external progress of the Jewish monarchy with similar periods in the history of other peoples; but it cannot, on the strength of that comparison, say anything about the call of Samuel, the penitence of David, or the spiritual experience of Amos or Isaiah. It can point to the affinities between the early narratives of Genesis and the Babylonian mythology; but it cannot say anything, on the strength of

those affinities, about the origin and meaning of sin. It can illustrate the records of our Lord's Birth of a Virgin and of His Resurrection from similar elements in the lore of other cults ; but it can say nothing about the possibility or the significance of our Lord's Incarnate or Risen Life. Granted these limitations, I should be prepared to concede to criticism the completest liberty on matters purely historical. I can well conceive an impartial historian, for instance, deciding from a purely scientific standpoint that the documentary evidence for the Virgin Birth was too slender to substantiate it. Such a conclusion, formed on a survey of the restricted data which alone are available to the historian as such, need not be, to my mind, inconsistent with a fully orthodox faith. For faith brings into purview a new element which only itself can discern—namely, the congruity¹ of the fact alleged with the religious experiences and values to which it has been indissociably attached. So far as the autonomy of historical inquiry is concerned, I would readily grant what Modernists claim—the same liberty of criticism in regard to the New Testament as has been exercised for over a generation in regard to the Old. But I should claim that the limits of that inquiry should be recognized.

Secondly, the Church can have nothing to do with what I may call 'the theory of the stupid editor'. This theory is prominent in Dr. Charles's edition of *Revelation* ; it appears in several works (such as Mr. Strachan's) on the Fourth Gospel, and it underlies much that was said at the Modern Churchmen's Conference last August. Its purpose is to explain how a supposed simple, straightforward, undifferentiated narrative or doctrine was developed into one which presents more difficult problems to the modern mind, and the theory does this by assuming that the document in question was revised or edited by some one whose intelligence was unequal to the task.

¹ The point is admirably worked out by Canon Quick in the *Church Quarterly* for April 1921. Lord Acton tells a story of Ranke, which illustrates the mental detachment of the pure historian. 'When a strenuous divine, who, like him, had written on the Reformation, hailed him as a comrade, Ranke repelled his advances. "You", he said, "are in the first place a Christian: I am in the first place an historian. There is a gulf between us."'—*The Study of History*, p. 41.

Now literary criticism and the discovery of sources is one thing ; abuse of the writers of the New Testament is another ; and the Church will have none of it.¹ There is no reason why proto-, deutero-, and trito-, attached to the name of a New Testament author, should be held to correspond to a descending sequence in the quality of intelligence. Inspiration apart, and from a common-sense point of view, lapse of years is no disadvantage to the telling of a true story : it gives time for inquiry and criticism as to fact, and for the fuller apprehension of teaching, and that consideration should always be weighed in the balance against the tendency of the human mind to make legend. This is the rock on which, it seems to me, Dr. Rashdall and Dr. Bethune-Baker founder when they reject the Johannine testimony to the pre-Incarnate consciousness of Christ. This teaching might be later than the Lord Himself, and yet not for that reason untrue. It is hard to see in what sense it is consistent to say that the Bible is inspired, and yet to add that in some of its most fundamental affirmations as to the Person of Christ it teaches what is false. According to the old idea of Scripture, Inspiration guaranteed its veracity for all purposes ; it was an omniscient oracle. During the last century we have learnt, as a result of criticism, to think of its various parts or writers as rather inspired *ad hoc*—that is to say, for particular and specific purposes germane to the spiritual life. Those purposes are variously discerned at different times as study and meditation reveal or preaching expounds them. But in every case the Church affirms that the lessons which Scripture intends to teach us are in substance true, whether or not they are contained in the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. To hold doctrines incompatible with these lessons is in practice to 'make the Word of God of none effect'.

And, thirdly, I would lay stress upon the inadmissibility, from a Scriptural point of view, of a phrase often used by Modernists—'supernatural, but non-miraculous'. That phrase involves a dichotomy between spirit and body, between inward and outward, which is out of tune

¹ A passage in Hazlitt's *Winterslow* is in point here. See his comment on Ayrton's criticism of Chaucer in the second Essay.

with the mind of the Bible. The Resurrection provides perhaps the clearest illustration. The Modern Churchmen at Girton seem to observe a curious reticence on this subject ; but the question was raised in a crucial form by Canon Streeter's celebrated essay in *Foundations*.¹ He there accepts the Empty Tomb, and he accepts the reality of the appearances of the Risen Lord ; but he does not think that the two groups of facts have any intrinsic connexion. He believes, in short, that the Lord's Body 'saw corruption'. Now that is an issue on which I think it would be perfectly reasonable to hazard the whole Christian faith. If he is right, then the miracle which of all others accounts for the faith and joy of the Church of the New Testament was a ghost story. The obvious care taken by the Evangelists to rule out precisely this conception counts for nothing. And the ground on which this view is advanced is that the alternatives involve an element of 'materialism'. Exactly : but that is an element fundamental to biblical thought, more especially as it concerns the Incarnate Son of God. It is not modern materialism ; but the word is fully applicable to it. For the glory of Scripture is not merely that it is a revelation of God, but that it is a revelation in and through history, graven in flesh and blood, Spirit always mated with Body. This is supremely so, of course, in Christ, the Word made flesh ; but it runs on, too, into St. Paul's conception of the Church and St. John's doctrine of the Eucharist. If it is materialistic to believe that in the Tomb the Body of Jesus suffered such a change and sublimation of cells and tissues as could enable it to enter the mode of being which is revealed in the Resurrection narratives, then the Church is materialist ; but let it be recognized that it is the materialism of St. Luke, St. Paul, and St. John.²

¹ It is fair to say that the essay was published in 1912, and it is possible that Canon Streeter has since then altered his view. I should like to take this opportunity of drawing attention to his valuable article in the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1922, on the composition of St. Luke's Gospel. All students of Christian origins will be grateful to him for it.

² I remember hearing a striking speech by the most eminent of living physicists at a Roman Catholic dinner in Cambridge some years

2. Next, it is an axiom of Catholic theology that the outward, sacramental, institutional life on which it lays so much stress functions wholly in and because of the ever-present activity of the Spirit of God. 'The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (St. John vi. 63). It is the conviction of the Church that in Baptism and Absolution, in the Laying-on of Hands, in Anointing, in the Consecration of the Eucharist, God Himself is in action by His Spirit and Word, cleansing, speaking, sealing, strengthening, healing, re-creating. We speak in our Church Catechism of two sacraments only as being 'generally necessary to salvation', because to them only attaches the universal obligation of Christ's express command. The form of the definition has value; but the restriction of the number of the sacraments to two, or even to seven, is a comparative innovation. For the Fathers of the early centuries the word 'sacrament' or 'mystery' has a wider and freer connotation. Thus Cyprian speaks of the content of the Lord's Prayer as 'sacraments';¹ Tertullian of the sacrament of Christ's Passion being represented in preaching;² Ambrose of the Incarnation,³ Augustine of the salt given to catechumens,⁴ as sacraments. As Harnack says, 'Everything in any way connected with the Deity and His revelation, and therefore, for example, the content of revelation as doctrine, is designated "sacrament"; and the word is also applied to the symbolical, which is always something mysterious and holy.'⁵ A sacrament was, in fact, a supernatural act having reference to the Church. And this early undifferentiated conception contains a very vital truth. It is the truth that what the Church does or teaches, Christ does or teaches. He, by His Word or Spirit, is the true agent, and it is His creative energy

ago, in which from the point of view of a physicist he paid a high tribute to the way in which Catholicism had witnessed to the dignity of 'matter'.

¹ *De Orat. Dom.* 9.

² *Adv. Iud.* 10.

³ *De Incarn.* 5.

⁴ *De Peccat. mer. et remiss.* II. xxvi (42).

⁵ *History of Dogma*, ii, 138 n.

which is operative in what is done: in every rite, at every altar, He is 'showing forth His glory'; and for that reason they are charged with a heavenly potency.

Catholic sacramental theology is simply the rationalization and reduction to order of this vast field of sacramental experience. Manifestly the disuse or neglect of this experience is a spiritual loss. The psychology of religion is teaching us that 'by rites emotions are re-enacted',¹ and the discovery of such a law is obviously of great consequence for faith. To the Catholic the Eucharist is at once a Passion and a Pentecost; it is, indeed, their perfect fusion, the projection into history of them both. And so, too, St. Paul can write that 'we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life' (Rom. vi. 4).

Why is it, then, that this highly spiritual conception, which counts so much upon the Divine agency, should have been so misunderstood? Leaving aside reasons of history and political memory, I would point to one cause in Catholic theology itself, which I believe to have contributed no little towards it—namely, the use of the phrase 'the sacramental system'. In its proper significance, as denoting a coherence of some kind in thought or action, the phrase is unexceptionable. But words are apt to lose their proper meanings, and 'system' is one of those which easily does so. It instinctively suggests something mechanical, fixed, and closed. There are, of course, systems to which such terms do not apply—as, for instance, the organic systems of our bodies. But none the less the harmful consequences of the term remain. Harm is done to Catholic thought itself, because the spontaneity and wonder of the Divine action is apt to be obscured; and by natural process harm is done, too, to minds of other mould, which get the impression that, while the Church says *Deus non obligatur sacramentis*, it does not really believe it. I should myself be the first to claim that God's saving grace is normally conditioned by a faithful use of the sacraments; but

¹ E. O. James, in *Theology*, September 1921, p. 180.

I should try to emphasize the fact that that is because they are governed and controlled at every point by His free and life-giving Spirit.

A word should be said, perhaps, in this connexion about the sacrament of Orders. Orders or Holy Order is, as its name implies, the sacrament of order ; and order is a form, and an indispensable form, alike of charity and of truth. Catholic belief postulates for the Church a Ministry whose continuity and interrelation guarantees, even in face (it may be) of evidence to the contrary at any moment, these values ; and it can do nothing to abate a principle which history and experience seem so abundantly to vindicate. Schism is chaotic ; and chaos does give ground to enmity and to error. At the same time I should be far from saying that the Church finds any pleasure in thrusting the problem of the Sacred Ministry into the foreground, though it does so when compelled. The Catholic instinct is far more that which Bacon expresses in his *Essay Of Great Place*. ' Preserve the right of thy place, but stir not questions of jurisdiction ; and rather assume thy right in silence, and *de facto*, than voice it with claims and challenges.' The controversy over Orders which has loomed so large in England for the last generation was, no doubt, a necessary stage in the progress towards Reunion ; but it was very far from being the last, or even the penultimate, stage. I venture to think that time must be given for that controversy to subside, and for other issues to emerge—those, in particular, which relate to the Spirit and the Sacraments—before we shall go very much farther along that road.

3. The third aspect of Catholicism which I will ask you to consider is the persistent witness it bears to the validity of human reason, when guided and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. The manifold crop of theological speculation which was harvested in the dogmatic definitions of the Councils, the development of creeds and liturgical forms, the constructive synthesis of scholasticism, the theology of the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century, and in their measure even the post-Tridentine Roman and Eastern formulations, are only

explicable on the basis of this belief. This belief in the power of reason to see and to express truth marks, perhaps, the outstanding contrast between Catholic and Puritan thought. The Church regards Holy Scripture, as we have seen, as inspired in a unique and peculiar sense; but it does not believe that inspiration ceased when the latest book of the New Testament was written. It believes, in fact, that it had itself sufficient inspiration to select, over a long period of time, those books which should form part of the Canon; and that the insight which made such a selection possible has never ceased to function. As each successive age has presented its issues and problems, clothed (as is inevitable) in their proper terminology, the Church has reached out to them and sought to declare its own essential faith and message in and through the conceptions thus available to it. Often there have been long delay and hesitation in accepting the new knowledge—never more than in the years before scholasticism became the recognized theology of the Church. Often there has been a refusal to pursue certain lines of advance—as when the Eastern Church stopped short of the *Filioque*. Always there has been a deep-seated consciousness of the immensity of the interests involved for life and for truth, and a vigilant guardianship of the *depositum fidei*. But none the less advance and development have taken place, and the Church has been nourished intellectually by the generations it saved.

In this connexion I find something to welcome as well as much to criticize in the papers read at the Modern Churchmen's Conference held at Girton last August. Attention has tended to focus itself mainly upon Dr. Rashdall's interpretation of the doctrine of the Incarnation and upon the very destructive article of Professor Bethune-Baker. But there were other voices, and voices which deserve a hearing. When, for example, Dr. Douglas White says that 'any creed of value must leave elbow-room for modern thought', and that 'if the Church is to retain—or regain—its influence, it must absorb science, not nibble at it; and in absorbing science, it must itself necessarily be altered by that absorption',

his contention is one which we need not hesitate to endorse. The notion that the Church of England should propound a new and much reduced creed is, no doubt, ridiculous; but it is gratifying to note how many of the speakers, particularly among the laymen, insist that a creed of some sort is necessary; whether (as Dr. Percy Gardner says) 'to voice the historic continuity of the Church and its permanent relation to Christ', or to serve (as the Master of Marlborough sees it) as an 'oath of allegiance' for the Christian army, or (in Professor Sorley's words) to witness to 'the importance of knowledge' as 'a way in which the religious consciousness as a whole finds expression, and which elevates and protects the other factors of the religious life'.

But, that being so, in what sense can we look upon the Creeds as final statements of belief? Professor Sorley, whose paper shows a real understanding of the Catholic position, puts the question thus: 'First Platonism and then Aristotelianism gave its colour to Church doctrine; and, had a new formulary been produced in England twenty or thirty years ago, it is safe to say that it would have been an amalgam of the ideas of Hegel and Darwin. Fortunately that danger has been averted, and the Christian is not required to believe in Hegel or in Darwin. But should Plato or Aristotle have any greater authority over his belief?' The answer, of course, is No. The case which Professor Sorley cites is a verse from the *Quicumque vult*, and one could, no doubt, point to similar cases in other oecumenical confessions and definitions. His mistake here lies in failing to distinguish between the form or terminology in which a doctrine is expressed and its essential content. What is authoritative is the latter, not the former. The latter represents original revelation given through history, recorded in Scripture, and ever more fully apprehended in the experience of the Church. But at every point, not excluding the initial stage of the process, the interpretation of this revelation is limited to the conceptions available at the time; and there is always in this interpretation a transitory element, a husk which protects the kernel. Only let us be sure that we preserve the kernel. And that kernel is

not, as so many Modernists seem to suppose, something quantitatively less than the kernel and husk combined. The most archaic of patristic formulae represents a 'proportion of faith', a coherency of elements, a *schema* of some kind. A man is perfectly entitled to say that the language which speaks of human nature being assumed in the Incarnation means nothing to him, since he does not know what 'human nature' or 'assumption' are. But he is not entitled, if he would hold the Catholic faith, to dismiss the ideas thus metaphorically expressed. The schematic value of the definition, protecting as it does the double truth of Christ as both God and Man, and of the pre-existence of the Incarnate, abides unimpaired by any inadequacy in the terms employed. If, from a Catholic standpoint, one objects to such restatements of the Faith as were outlined at Cambridge by Dr. Rashdall and Professor Bethune-Baker, it is because they violate this *schema*, and instead of restating an old doctrine state in fact a new one.

My own inclination is to doubt whether philosophy is to-day sufficiently settled in its use of terms to permit of a really successful attempt to restate the doctrine of Christ's Person. But I should be sorry to suggest that this inability extends to the whole field of Christian doctrine. We shall do well to remember how small a part of the whole Church the Church of England is, and concern ourselves rather with those formularies for which we are, in our present position, responsible than with those which we share with the rest of Catholic Christendom. To construct a new creed for Anglicans is a notion which to me is not only fantastic, but repellent; for it means simply to stereotype our isolation, and therefore, with eyes open, to take a retrograde step. 'Quench not the smoking flax' of hope in a realized Catholic unity. The cave of Adullam may be very comfortable for those who are in it, but they are of no use to their neighbours outside; and our task to-day is to play our part in the whole field of the Christian Church. And that rôle will be begun when we take steps to set what really is our own house in order. I can echo the words of Dr. Douglas White at Cambridge,

when he asks us to ' look on the question of creed, not in the light of a policy of " reunion ", but as a matter of urgent domestic reform within the Church of England ' ; though I should insist that such a reform would, in point of fact, react very rapidly upon reunion. In other words, what I want to see taken in hand is the Thirty-nine Articles. We have there a piece of ' urgent domestic reform ' which we are equipped to deal with, towards which men of all schools of thought could contribute, and where great things might be achieved. If the damaging rifts in our ecclesiastical life to-day are to be healed, it can only be by a reconsideration of the grounds of belief ; and there the Articles shed little or no light. God forbid that we should revise the Articles—still less add to them—and present them afresh : that would be worse than keeping them in the cupboard. After all, what both clergy and laity want is not a special test for Anglicans superimposed upon the Scriptures and the Creeds, but a practical manual of teaching ; a Greater Catechism, in fact. Such a Catechism could be written in the language of to-day, and could deal with living issues : and its compilation and use should lead the laity to accord a new confidence to the teaching office of the Ministry.

But it is time to conclude. You will probably have recognized that the conception of Inspiration which I have tried to unfold in its application to the Scriptures, to the sacramental and institutional life of the Church, and to the validity of theological thought, provides the essentials of a doctrine of Authority. If it stands, the view of religion expressed in the title of Sabatier's book, *The Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, belongs to a past age : the terms contrasted are not opposites, but complementary. The function of our own Communion seems to lie peculiarly in the embodiment of their synthesis. And we need not be afraid that such real insight as we claim for the Church's authoritative voice at any moment will close any avenues to faith or narrow the compass of serious inquiry. Beyond the simplest and least disputed Article of the Creed there stretch the uncharted seas of the Divine Love, calling

to the men of all nations to launch out into their deep. Of that quest and its goal, we may say what Plato says of his own philosophy in his Seventh Epistle: 'It cannot be put into words as can other inquiries, but after long intercourse with the thing itself and after it has been lived with, suddenly, as when the fire leaps up and the light kindles, it is found in the soul and feeds itself there.'

[Note to p. 18. The most significant part of the Chalcedonian definition (A. D. 451) is thus translated in Prof. Bethune-Baker's *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 287:

'Following, therefore, the holy Fathers, we confess and all teach with one accord one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once perfect (complete) in Godhead and perfect (complete) in manhood, truly God and truly man, and, further, of a reasonable soul and body; of one essence with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one essence with us as regards his manhood, in all respects like us, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood—on account of us and our salvation—begotten in the last days of Mary the Virgin, bearer of God; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, proclaimed in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the difference of the natures being in no way destroyed on account of the union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one hypostasis—not as though parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Logos, Lord, Jesus Christ, even as the prophets from of old and the Lord Jesus Christ taught us concerning him, and the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.'

II

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

By the Rev. CLEMENT F. ROGERS, M.A.
Professor of Pastoral and Liturgical Theology
King's College, University of London

I

WE are met here as members of different religious bodies to consider what we each stand for. Our aim, I take it, is that of mutual understanding, and such understanding is surest when we see our differences clearly.

We are not here to consider detailed proposals for reunion, not even to discuss whether reunion is possible or desirable. Still less are we met to pay one another compliments, but just to try and clear the air, to say frankly and sincerely what we think.

So, when I was asked to speak, I gave warning that I might prove the wrong person to invite. I said that I was critical of much that is being said to-day on the subject of reunion, and that I thought the differences which have, as a matter of fact, caused such divisions as we see in Christendom are not so slight as people often seem to assume.

But even for men to disagree they must have some common ground. They must have some standard accepted by both sides by which their differences may be measured. Just as in moral questions there is wide diversity of opinion as to what should be done in different cases, but all agree that there is such a thing as right and wrong, so, I take it, we may assume that we all feel the need of Christianity in our modern life. We all, I assume, agree that in some way or other it is the solution of all our difficulties, whether in the externals of living, as in our literature or education that to-day so lack inspiration ;

or in the ideals of life, to give men a higher aim than the cult of pleasure or of pursuit of health ; or in the social and political movements that are the outcome of those ideals, in the battle with drink, lust, and greed ; in the problems of races and classes, of black and white, of Celt and Saxon, of rich and poor ; or in questions of the State and the individual, of liberty and order, of marriage and the home ; in all these I assume we agree that Christianity is the deciding factor.¹

With less confidence, but with considerable assurance, I assume that we agree as to the disastrous results of division. Whether we are travelling in Wales and see a number of little mean churches and chapels in each village which ought to have raised one beautiful fane to the glory of God, and covered the land with shrines as noble as those which make the glory of Norfolk ; or whether we think of the pettiness and parochialism of our Church life, kept down by its weakness to the little details of personal and local needs, and unable to grapple with big issues ; when we continually find ourselves brought up against the fact that you cannot count on the mass of people having even the traditional familiarity with the things of religion that comes of itself where men are all of one mind ; then we see how deplorable are the results of disunion. Even when it was fashionable, as it no longer seems to be, to talk of ' rivalry in good works ', the Church has always insisted on this as an evil. Though where the blame lies for the sin is, of course, another question.

Again, in putting a case we are apt to see our own ideal, to describe things of our own cause as they ought to be, while others see them as they are. It may be said, and said with justice I allow, that what I shall put forward does not represent the Church in fact. I grant willingly that other bodies are more successful in the presentation of their ideals. I can recognize the effective discipline of the Roman Church, the self-sacrifice of her members, her firm stand in, at any rate, certain moral

¹ I have worked out this theme more fully in my book *Pastoral Theology and the Modern World* (Oxford, 1920), Ch. VI, 'The Field of Battle.'

questions, as, for instance, in the matter of the marriage law. I can appreciate the logical coherence of her doctrines, and especially I can admire her devotion and her piety. I recognize, too, the great virility of the Evangelical bodies, their power of self-government and their missionary zeal, their initiative and practical work, and their real belief in learning and theology, at any rate among their clergy. I can see all these round me in actual working.

Nevertheless, I believe that I am justified in setting before you my ideal, even if imperfectly realized in fact. For I believe that the English Church stands in a peculiar relation to the English people; that the calling of the English people in the political world is repeated in the vocation of the Church of England in the religious; and that, if this is so, she may be the link between the Roman Church on the one side, and the great body of Evangelical Christianity on the other, so that, as Joseph le Maistre said, 'if ever Christians are to come together, as everything calls on them to do, it seems that the start must come from the Church of England'.¹

What I shall say of the defects and peculiar features of the Church of England is, I believe, grounded in her history, especially since the Reformation. Perhaps the less said about Henry VIII the better, but in his reign there were reformers who wished for reform without a breach with the past. Men like Colet and More in England, as Erasmus abroad, believed in reformation by sound learning. During the king's reign after the breach with Rome, apart from the plundering of the monasteries, things went on much the same as before. But after his death the violence of Puritan methods, made more fierce by the persecutions of Mary which drove the leading reformers abroad and led them to adopt a spirit alien to English reasonableness, forced the majority of men into two sharply opposed hostile camps. Both were well equipped, Rome with all her imposing body of tradition,

¹ *Considérations sur La France*, 1797, p. 32. Similar passages from Dr. C. A. Briggs, a Presbyterian, Dr. Newman Smyth, a Congregationalist, and Dr. Söderblom, a Swedish Lutheran, &c., can be found in an article by C. E. Fløystrup in the *Church Quarterly Review* for July 1920, 'Anglicanism and Lutheranism.'

and Geneva with Calvin's clear logical coherent corpus of theology. Against these two Latin and foreign presentations of Christianity—for German influence had rapidly died out—the ill-equipped, compromising, confused and bewildered, typically English Church could barely hold her own. The Armada threatened her from outside; Calvinism nearly swamped her within. She resisted both as best she could by the dubious method of State aid, and by conceding all she could to Calvinism in doctrine and ceremonial without actually giving way. This is the key to the understanding of her liturgy and her thirty-nine articles. The questions they fought over for so long were fundamentally those which divide us to-day. The language is changed; we are less abusive and violent, but the thing which strikes the student of those times is how modern it all is. We are still divided, and have been for three hundred years, on just the same points, little and great.

In time the Church began to feel her feet again in the flood. After Hooker's great work she began to make her position clear. The rise of the Caroline Divines, and the life of learning at the Universities, presented to the eyes of the world a form of Catholic Christianity essentially English, typical of what is best and most characteristic in our national life, learned, cultured, gentlemanly, unique. But, unfortunately, it did not represent the whole of English life. It was small in extent and limited in power. When we contrast, for instance, the life and influence of the English Church, wellnigh destroyed by Cromwell, with the imposing show of the Church of France—except St. Paul's Cathedral, a few Oxford chapels, and Wren's replaced City churches, there were practically no new churches built at that time, though several cathedrals were nearly destroyed—we see how comparatively small and weak the Church became.

The English Church has only represented a section of the English people, but in many ways she is characteristically English. She has laid stress on practical duties. Her great preachers have been those who dealt with moral subjects; indeed, she has been accused of preaching mere morality. Her activities have been shown in parish

work. She has, in true English spirit, tolerated a wide variety of beliefs. It has been cast up at us that one bishop says one thing and another exactly the opposite. Even before the Reformation, Dr. Creighton tells us, this tolerance of opinion distinguished England from other countries, and adds :

‘ the truth is that every Englishman likes to express his opinion if he takes the trouble to make one. What becomes of his opinion is a matter of secondary importance ; he gives it to his fellows for what it is worth, and he knows they will not attach to it an undue importance ’.¹

It is when practical results follow in the shape of separation that the Englishman cares. The English Church has always been tolerant of heresy ; it is schism that she regards as a sin.

Again, the English people have an extraordinary power of assimilation and coherence. Our race, formed of a fusion of Celt, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, has proved to be the uniting factor, as it were the greatest common measure, of Welsh, Scotch, and (to a great extent) of Irish. The Englishman in philosophy, in art, in music, has always been easily influenced by foreign ideas, has absorbed them, yet has remained after all stubbornly English. England, surpassed in nearly every point by other races and peoples (at any rate so they all tell us in turn), has surpassed them in the power of uniting and utilizing their gifts to the world. Her empire has grown by this particular genius. The only parallel in history is that of ancient Rome, which ruled and conquered the world by her conception of equal law for all, and by making subject races citizens of the empire. England has surpassed her in proportion as she has shown a power of allowing freedom and securing coherence. There are wide divergences of opinion, of temperament, of practice, in the English Church, but her unity in spite of it all is a very real thing.

Again, the Church is marked by the characteristic

¹ ‘ The English National Church,’ Romanes Lecture, 1896, in *Historical Lectures and Addresses* (Longmans, 1903), p. 229.

English habit of self-depreciation. We English are always running ourselves down, but we don't really mean it. Our way is to distrust nations or persons who are always asserting themselves and declaring their infallibility. We seldom tell lies, but we seldom tell the truth. To tell the whole truth is generally uncharitable and uncalled for. It makes for peace and goodwill to keep your opinions and criticisms to yourself. This, of course, is rather baffling, and is often misunderstood by foreigners. The Germans took our continual self-depreciation seriously. They would never have described themselves as decadent; even if they had thought that they were, they would have whistled to keep up their courage. We seldom say what we think about other people either, and therefore soon think kindly of them again. So our habit, a right one I am sure on the whole, of minding our own business and not trying to set other people right, often leads to a misunderstanding. The fact that at Conferences and in the Press we do not criticize our fellow Christians often leads people to think that we agree with all they say or do.

So, while recognizing the large areas of agreement—indeed in open-air Evidential work I am always dwelling on them—I hold that the things which divide us are serious if only for the fact that they have divided us. We are here to speak openly and to lay aside something of our English habit of reticence. So I will ask you to bear with me if I lay stress on our differences and to take in good part the criticisms that are implied.

II

i. What are some of these dividing points? In the first place, we believe that the Church was founded by Christ, a visible organized body, a kingdom *in*, though not *of*, this world. We maintain that as a fact the Church has had a continuous life ever since; that through her succession of bishops she has preserved this continuity. Whatever may be the true theory of the Apostolic Succession, even if there is no intrinsic necessity for episcopacy, as a matter of fact the Church has been so organized. Of this continuous Church that Christ founded

we believe that we are the historical representative here in England.

Now clearly there can be no possible ground of agreement between those who believe this and those who do not—who believe it, I mean, in the practical sense of adhering to that Church whatever their notions may be. We are at issue even in the title of our course ‘What do the Churches stand for?’ If we are right in believing that Christ founded the Church, there are in this sense no such things as ‘the Churches’. If by courtesy we use the expression of other bodies, as we often do in ordinary conversation, we are using the word in what to us is a non-natural sense. Politeness may demand it, but if we are to understand one another we must speak exactly. There can be no eirenicon in an equivocation.

We may, of course, be wrong. I am not arguing that now. It may be a matter indifferent. Many people think it is. Our definition of the Church may be incorrect. It may be that only a church under a Vicar of Christ is a true church. The theory of an invisible church is a reasonable one. It is held by many good and learned men. The theory of Calvinism is quite logical, that there is a church of the elect. The theory that where Christ is there is the Church, and that he is present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, is one that has been held by great theologians. The view that competition between religious organizations is a good thing, though out of favour just now, is one that has been seriously and ably argued. But these are not the points here. The two positions that I have contrasted are incompatible. It is not possible for Christ to have founded the Church and not to have founded it. It is not possible for the question to be one that *does* matter and does *not* matter. It is not a question which is best, but a question of fact.

I know that there are many churchmen who do not hold the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, but this is the historical and official position of the English Church. It is implied in her liturgy and her creeds. Many are quite indifferent on the subject in the characteristic way of the Englishman who does not bother about ideas, but

even they do not *practically* deny it by separation, and that is the test.

Again, we do not limit God's power. In our belief God can and does work outside His Church. We are perfectly ready to recognize the workings of His grace in other bodies, to concede often that they are greater in them than in us. We deny nothing that they claim (except in the case of the Roman Catholics and high church Presbyterians). We know that the work of their ministers has been blessed. We do not deny that Christ has given Himself to them in the Sacrament as administered by their clergy. All we say is that they are not members of a visible church founded by Christ, if so be that He did not found one.

But for those of us who believe that He did, I think you will agree that the command is absolute to be loyal to that Church. For us (we say nothing of others) it is 'necessary to salvation' to obey its precepts, and enter it by baptism. We dare not disobey. For those who hold He founded no church there can be no obligation to belong to one more than to another. We can concede all they claim for their orders, but what we cannot do is to concede that we have nothing more.

ii. But of course we do not stop there. We believe that this conception of a visible and catholic church is the only one for modern thought, just as it has proved adequate for ancient thought. We hold that it meets to-day's needs and is what the world wants.

We are realizing more and more the value of the past. Sir. A. Balfour, for instance, in his *Foundations of Belief*, has reminded us of what we owe to Authority.¹ Mr. Graham Wallas writes of our 'Social Heritage', Mr. Benjamin Kidd discourses on our 'Cultural Inheritance', and is read. The ideas of evolution and development have entered into all our ways of thinking. We lay stress on continuity in Natural Science. We find no difficulty in realizing what Aristotle pointed out long ago, that the end lies hid in the beginning, and that the nature of a thing is seen in its fully developed end.² In social theory we dwell on corporate interests, on co-operation and union. It has

¹ p. 229.

² *Politics*, Bk. I, § 2.

become impossible to think of Society except as an organism. The problem of the freedom of corporate bodies within the State is, as Mr. J. N. Figgis pointed out, perhaps the most pressing political problem of the day.¹ Every one quotes the hackneyed saying 'We are all Socialists now'. In such an atmosphere only a Christianity embodied in a corporate organic form seems to be adequate. Again, only a church claiming divine sanction is able to arouse a certain sentiment that is necessary for at any rate a particular kind of enthusiasm and devotion. A mere human arrangement cannot make the peculiar emotional and aesthetic appeal that modern psychology tells us counts for so much. You cannot sing hymns about an association or a connexion as you can about a church. As a matter of fact that was part of the strength of the Tractarian Movement over the contemporary Evangelicalism. In poetry, in novels, we see how the idea of a divinely founded church (an idea which we share with the Roman Catholics and the East) appeals to the imagination of men.

This does not in itself depend on any particular form of succession, though we claim that the Apostolic Succession can be established as a fact of history. The idea of a catholic church is preached by some at least who are without it—for instance, by Dr. Orchard. Nor does it depend on any particular theory of the relation of branches to the whole. The branch theory (though personally I believe it to be sound) may be confusing. In places like America, where old national divisions have become confused, and branch churches exist side by side, it lays itself open to obvious criticism. But, whatever be the true theory, the Church of England is a fact, a real organism with a very real life. The differences of teaching and the varieties of services found in her may be illogical and indefensible. Our Roman Catholic fellow Christians are never tired of pointing them out as a sign that we have no real unity, but, to many at least, that seems a much more real unity which enables her to hold together in spite of such contradictions. A unity that is vital seems to many to be more real than one mainly imposed by discipline.

¹ See his *Churches in the Modern State*.

And our Church seems to us to be endowed with the same qualities and entrusted with the same mission in religion that the English race is endowed and entrusted with in the world. She seems to us to be essentially English, for bad if you like, but also for good. She has the same power of welcoming and absorbing the ideas of other races, of being influenced by them yet remaining unchangeably English. She seems to have the same power of uniting different schools of thought, or even races, often much abler than herself, to form a common meeting-point for very different elements. And this she does, as far as she does it, not, as is often said, by compromise, but by tolerance. She has characteristically the English power of governing. She is often stupid, often unattractive, often 'muddling through', but never rattled, with at least the chance of slowly leavening and uniting the nation, as the English method and the English language are slowly prevailing throughout the world.

There are the same dangers in politics and in Church matters to-day. We are in a state of reaction from German imperialism. We are not likely to be tempted by the idea of a strong centralized efficient military government. Indeed, our danger is rather that of ignoring the very real contribution Germany has to make in the life of the world, and the very real lessons we can learn from her counterpart in the realm of religion. We have much to learn both from Germany and from Rome.

But our pressing problems are those which arise from sectional life; from the claims of small nations to exist within a federation or league; the value and danger of class, of party consciousness within the whole. The problem of liberty of groups with their independent life within the State is, as we saw, one of the most urgent to-day.

For Nationalism tends to be provincial. Let us take an instance that is non-controversial, at any rate here. I was at the Welsh National Eisteddfod this summer. It was impossible for an Englishman not to feel sympathy with the national aspirations there so warmly expressed. The Welsh have a great inheritance from the past, they have peculiar gifts to-day to bring to the store

of the world. They felt there, and continually insisted, that the preservation of their ancient language, the turning back to their own folk songs and hymns, the resisting of foreign influences, was necessary for their music and national life, that they could only be great if true to themselves. All this is true of them as it is true universally. But over-emphasis on nationality spells narrowness. It means isolation and second-rateness. It entails unwillingness to learn from fear of losing what you own. The real problem for small nations is a much harder one, namely, that of receiving from outside and giving to what you receive your own interpretation, of stamping it with your genius, and sending it out again to contribute your quota to the whole. Insistence on nationality is like refusing to do anything but sing solos to your own accompaniment. This is no doubt a delightful form of art, but not the highest. We do not want, on the other hand, the whole world to sing in unison. We want each nation to give its own interpretation on its own individual instrument, but as part of an orchestra. It is just because we English people do not, on the whole, insist on our own peculiarities that we have been able to conduct without destroying other races. It is because we are, as a rule, ready to welcome and find a place for them that we can make our Empire a meeting-place for them, because we are generally great enough not to insist on our nationality while we do maintain a unity. The case of the Welsh is one instance, but the same problem lies before us with the Jews, with India, with Ireland.

So in our conception of the Church we find the same problem of the relation of national churches to the one Catholic Church. Our ideal is not military. We do not seek uniformity or lay great stress on discipline. That is the ideal of Rome. Nor are we sectional. We realize the intense life of small groups, but in isolation their life seems to us inadequate. We believe that fullness of spiritual life is only possible in an organic—that is, a living—body, that the Church is not a mechanical contrivance of any man's invention, that men cannot found churches, and that God has ordered this, and called us to a peculiar mission in His purpose.

iii. You may say this is all in the realm of theory and ask, 'What practical difference does it make?' Divergent theories must issue in different practices, and in outward observances these contrasts are even more clearly marked.

The first consequence is seen in our conception of church-going, the most conspicuous feature of religion and the most important element of church life. Let me emphasize the contrast. We in the Church hold that we go to church for worship, not (primarily) for edification; because it is a duty to God, not because it confers an advantage to ourselves. The centre of our churches is the altar not the pulpit. We go to give, not to get; to come before God, not to listen to a man.

I am aware that many churchmen do not hold this view, at any rate clearly, but this is the whole presupposition of our liturgy. I am aware that we fail to carry out this ideal, that we often preach or mumble the prayers, but it *is* our ideal and the Church is strongest just where people grasp this and in proportion as they grasp it. It is just here that the most striking contrast is seen between us and practically all other bodies except the Roman Catholics. And where we are alike it is just in those points that we in Church deplore and are anxious to get rid of. To begin with—our idea of a church is that of a building set apart and consecrated to the service of God. I am quite aware that we often belie this by our irreverence. We talk in church. We regard our cathedrals as show places. We turn them into concert halls for our musical festivals. But we recognize this as irreverence and deplore it. The day the invitation to speak here came to me I attended the annual meeting of the Welsh Folk Song Society of the National Eisteddfod. After tea in a school-room kindly lent by one of the local chapel authorities we adjourned for the meeting into the chapel itself. What would have corresponded to the east end of one of our churches, which we adorn with symbols of our faith and where we place our altars, was occupied by an organ, underneath which was a pulpit. After sundry pleasantries the chief speaker entered this pulpit for his speech. The chairman sat at what I suppose was the Communion table. There was no harm in it, for nobody

seemed in the least uncomfortable, and certainly no one was shocked. But that is not in the least our idea of a church, and I personally could not get over a feeling of discomfort during the whole meeting.

Again, for us the attitude of prayer is kneeling. I am aware that many of our people, men especially, never kneel. But we deplore it because we feel it means that they have not grasped what prayer is. I know it is largely our fault. We do not provide sufficient room. It is often quite difficult in our churches to get down on our knees, and we provide too few kneelers, especially in the aisles. But in this chapel it would have been quite impossible to kneel. No provision was made for kneeling, and obviously no one was expected to do so. It is, of course, possible to pray sitting. We do so in ejaculatory prayer when sitting at our business, and, clearly, pious Evangelical Christians do so. But for us it is impossible for a man in that attitude in church to be praying. These people who lounge forward during the service are not. There is all the difference in the attitude of our aged and infirm people who are *unable* to go down on their knees.

So, too, for us extempore prayer seems to be not a prayer but a sermon. When during the War I was working in a Y.M.C.A. hut, every evening at 9 p.m. there was what was called family prayers. To me it seemed merely a preachment to the men, warning them of the dangers of London and reminding them of their mothers, ending up with a vote of thanks to the voluntary workers. The conductor often forgot and actually addressed the men instead of the Almighty for several sentences. To me it was always most painful. I went once to a united service in the Kingsway Opera House. A well-known missionary recited 'Just as I am' on the stage. He had a beautiful voice. His gestures were wonderfully lissome and graceful, especially the movements of his arms as he swayed about with his body. We sat in our seats and looked at him. The congregation seemed for the most part to see nothing strange in it. To me it was quite horribly profane. It was to me as painful as probably a collect intoned by a priest in a chasuble would have been to the

majority of those present. For in fact our conceptions and customs of prayer are quite different.

For us the liturgy is the prayer of the whole Church. It is the same, with variations in detail, all over England. Our services constitute a round of praise offered up continually by the Church. They are not dependent on any one man. We have our priests as spokesmen of the congregation and representatives of the whole Church, but we do not want any man to come between us and our God. We regard this dependence on a man for the prayers as a bad form of priestcraft. Reliance on the personality of a man in this way seems to us to keep the whole down to the level of mediocrity. You cannot expect a cultured man to 'sit under' an ignorant preacher; if a priest is ministering at the altar or in his stall, his culture or knowledge is a matter indifferent.

I am aware that there is much of this 'personal work', as it is called, in the Church. Masses of people only go to church to hear the sermon. They like to be shaken hands with, and grumble if they are not visited. They speak of 'Mr. So and So's church'. But that is all in spite of the Prayer Book. It is the sort of thing we want to get rid of. Where the conception of the Church is grasped there is a reality in life and worship that is felt at once. There the work is permanent and does not depend on any man. There, there is free intercommuni-
cation between church and church, and men can enter into any wherever they happen to be and can feel at home at once.

And this, I am convinced, is what the mass of people want. They want big churches where you do not feel conspicuous, places set apart, witnesses to religion up and down the country, homes of prayer. They want churches where you are left alone, where you have the atmosphere of worship, where people are praying with you and you are at home, not places where you are pounced upon by churchwardens and welcomed as if you were an outsider and put in a pew; not places stuffed up with seats like a lecture-room, but places where you are not fussed about by a verger or shaken hands with and welcomed by a vicar as if it were his private drawing-room, where devotion

can be free and spontaneous, where there is kept up a round of beautiful and dignified worship, where the presence of God can be felt. Practically every Roman Catholic church has it and it is the source of the Roman Church's strength—it has nothing whatever to do with the Pope. We have it in our degree. We are aiming at getting it everywhere, but we cannot concede that there is no difference between our conception and one that seems to us diametrically opposite.

iv. For it is not a mere question of secondary matters. The Christianity of the Church is sacramental. By that I mean that we believe that things inward and outward are bound together, that the outward is the manifestation of the inward and the inward mediated by the outward. This is characteristic of the Church.

Again, there are large areas of Church life where the idea seems absent, but they are not characteristic parts nor those that have influence. It is significant that a writer like Mr. Graham Wallas, in his criticism of religion in England, only thinks it necessary to criticize the Church and in the Church the High Church party.¹ I do not think his criticism either just or profound, but the Christianity that he attacks is what he considers to be the Christianity that counts. It is not, or at least need not be, un-intellectual, as he assumes. Certainly only a catholic and sacramental Christianity can be in touch with all life, can find a place for music, architecture, and literature. Only such Christianity can attract and serve all classes and conditions. The modern young man or woman, as depicted, for instance, in Miss Rose Macaulay's clever books, has generally no religion, but if he or she has any (she says) it will be in the form of Roman or Anglo-Catholicism. Only a sacramental Christianity can inspire and enter into all life and make its divers achievements several means of grace.

I know, again, that we do not realize this in fact, but it is our theory, while the whole tradition of Puritanism is the other way. It regards all sacramentalism as idolatry, and was quite consistent when it desecrated our cathedrals, breaking their carving and shattering their

¹ *Our Social Heritage* (Geo. Allen), 1921, Chapter XII, The Church.

windows. The two rival theories are that of banishing, and that of sanctifying, the things of the world, and they are mutually incompatible.

So Christianity must be more than the religion of a book. We recognize the immense value of the Bible. We read it continuously in our Offices. We honour it with ceremonial, at least with standing, when it is read at the altar. But the Bible was created by the Church, needs to be interpreted by the Church, is only effective in connexion with the life of the Church (a book without a society to circulate it seldom gets off the library shelves). And if a Christianity based merely on the Bible is inadequate, how futile and pathetic is such a suggestion as that of Mr. Wells in his latest book, of making a substitute for the Bible for the salvation of the modern world in the form of a compilation of elegant extracts and beauties of literature!¹

Or, again, the Church's conception of education is bound to be different, as indeed it has proved. We believe that religion is the chief factor to train the mind and character. We believe it should permeate and inspire all the whole round of lessons. Therefore we want what is called the religious atmosphere in the school, in which the child can grow up unconsciously and normally religious. Just as to make a child musical you should surround him with an atmosphere of good music, so we believe that from youth the right religious conditions should surround him. He is baptized into the Church in infancy, and the right course is for every faculty to be developed naturally without self-consciousness in religion.²

The rival theory is that religious teaching should be left to voluntary agencies, to Sunday schools and classes, that at most it should be an extra, like French, as it unfortunately has generally been, that the normal thing should be conversion rather than growth in grace. The theory of Puritanism is quite logical and consistent, but it is quite a different one from ours, as has been shown in all the recent school controversies.

¹ *The Salvaging of Civilization* (Cassell), Chapters IV and V, 'The Bible of Civilization.'

² I have elaborated this idea in an essay, 'Religion the most effective Instrument in Education,' printed in my *Pastoral Theology and the Modern World*, p. 165.

Again, the larger outlook of Catholic Christianity, with its greater experience of the past, seems often to make it a safer guide in morals. Notably is this the case in the question of the marriage law. The arguments for 'permitting' remarriage after divorce are so plausible to any one only considering a single case, so disastrous and reactionary in their widespread effects, as we can see all round us. It is not my place to criticize Christians outside the body to which I belong. We have too many ourselves who are failing to uphold the Church's law, but at least the view of those who hold that marriage is a permanent relationship and those who hold it is a terminable contract cannot be reconciled.

These are a few of the practical differences between Catholic and sacramental Christianity and Puritanism. I have tried to emphasize the contrasts because I believe that sacramental Christianity is the Christianity of Christ, who, according to our belief, united the invisible Godhead with the visible manhood in what we might call the great sacrament of the Incarnation.

IV

I have gone on too long. I have been, perhaps, too critical. I have dwelt, it may be, too much on differences, but that was my object. Let me conclude by repeating that I gladly recognize large areas of agreement between Christians, that I recognize the many defects of my own Church. I readily concede that the Roman Church far surpasses us in her worship and devotion, in her Catholicity if you like, and that that is her strength. I readily concede that the Evangelical bodies far surpass us in nationality, that they really interpret certain sections of society and thought better than we do, that they actually represent English religion more effectually. I confess we fail to carry out our ideas and to rise to our opportunities. But the points I have dwelt on are characteristic, and the Church is strongest where they are to the fore.

I recognize that there are many questions where interdenominational action is perfectly possible. On questions of temperance, purity, Sunday rest, or at such

conferences as we are taking part in now, it is obviously right. So, again, undenominationalism is the right principle in matters in which religious differences are irrelevant. Charity, employment, custom in shops, social meetings, sports, politics, must all be undenominational. But in religious matters, in worship, in the pulpit, at the altar, the point at issue is generally *the* point, and, as I see it, historically and actually, our differences are fundamental.

Which is right each must decide for himself. But on one point I am sure we shall all agree: decision will be won not by controversy but by example.

III

CONGREGATIONALISM

By the Rev. ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D.
Principal of New College, London

I

1. IT is clear that it is very much easier to state the position of a denomination which is fully organized as regards creed, ritual, and government than that of a denomination which insists on the freedom of the local congregation under the Spirit of God. If in the Church of England the XXXIX Articles and the Book of Common Prayer can receive a *Low*, *Broad* and *High* interpretation, and can be claimed as *Protestant* and *Catholic*, what can be said of a voluntary association of churches which have no common creed or ritual? Practically the situation is not as hopeless as theoretically it appears. While there is a great variety of doctrine and practice, and the extreme men, conservative or liberal, are far from agreement, yet the main body of Congregationalists holds so much in common that some account of what it stands for may be without any rashness attempted.

2. A distinction must be at once made between the *Old Independency* and the *Modern Congregationalism*. The Separatists, whom we claim as our ecclesiastical ancestors, did not leave the Church of England in the interests of a particular polity. That was not the primary intention, but a secondary result. They wanted a more thorough and speedy reformation of the Church than either the Queen or the bishops were prepared to grant, and so 'without tarrying for any' they gathered in small congregations, in which they sought to refashion the church. As they understood the New Testament the

church of each place was independent of the others, although in association with them, and they tried to reproduce the apostolic churches in all their details. Although there are still among us 'Old Independents' who insist on the absolute autonomy of the local congregations, not many of them would now insist on so literal an imitation of the apostolic churches. In Modern Congregationalism this autonomy is voluntarily modified by the association of the churches with one another to promote their common interests, such as the education, qualification, and support of the ministry.

II

While the principle is still asserted, that each such local congregation is a *church*, capable of discharging the functions, and enjoying the privileges of a church without outside control as regards creed, ritual, or government, yet this principle receives what may be called a *broad, low, and high* interpretation. According to the first, the Reformation stood for private judgement in religion, and accordingly devout persons have the right to associate themselves with other like-minded persons for common witness, worship, and work. There are comparatively few Congregationalists who would hold that view. According to the second view, the individual believer, saved by grace, as guided by the Spirit must be free to follow that guidance, and accordingly any company of believers gathered in Christ's Name can confidently look for His Presence, and can submit only to His authority as exercised in the company so gathered in His Name. Each church so formed by the gathering together of believers is complete in itself, although it may enter into association with other churches without, however, the surrender of its freedom. I myself hold the third view, and it is held by a number of the responsible leaders of the denomination in substance, although possibly few, if any, would present it exactly in the form in which I do. I was led to it by my own reflection before I discovered that it was put forward by that great authority on the constitution of the Early Church, Sohm, as the view held

in the Apostolic Church. I may put it briefly before quoting Sohm in confirmation. Each local congregation is *a church* because it is the local manifestation and operation of *the Church*, the one body of Christ, 'which is the fulfilment (plerōma) of Him that filleth all in all' (Eph. i. 23), and which is present wherever Christ is present, as He is where any company of believers is gathered together in His Name (Matt. xviii. 20). So important is Sohm's statement that it must be quoted in full :

'The faith of Christians sees in every assembly of Christians gathered together in the Spirit the whole of Christendom, the people of God, the universal society. Upon these grounds every assembly of Christians, great or little, which meets in the Name of the Lord, is called *Ecclesia*, the gathering of the New Testament people of Israel; the general assembly of all the Christians of the same place bears the name of *Ecclesia*, because it represents, not an assembly of this local community, but an assembly of all Christendom (Israel). In the same way, an assembly of the community belonging to one house. Thus there is but one *Ecclesia*, the assembly of all Christendom: though this one church has innumerable manifestations.' (*Kirchenrecht*, pp. 20-1.)

III

I. It may, however, be contended as an objection to this view that the twentieth is not the first century, and that a view tenable in the apostolic age is unjustified to-day. How can continuity be maintained? What may be called broadly the *Catholic* view is that the continuity must be maintained by organization, *the apostolic succession of the historic episcopate*. As these lectures are being given in the interests of Christian Reunion, that Christians, denominationally severed, may come to understand one another, I refrain from any controversy, but in as conciliatory a spirit as can be I am content to state the view of continuity held by Congregationalism. Although *the apostolic succession of the historic episcopate*, whether it

correspond with historical facts or not, has been of some use and worth for the *organization* of the church, it is not necessary for what is most important, its *inspiration*, the operation of the Spirit of God in it, due to the Presence of the Risen, Living, and Reigning Christ with believers in their community in the Spirit. Congregationalism has thus a theological foundation. This the 'broad' interpretation of the principle ignores, but the 'low' and the 'high' are agreed on this, that it is only because Christ Himself is present in the local congregation, and that its deliberations and decisions are guided by His Spirit, that it has a claim to be a church. There may have been individual Congregationalists who tended towards Unitarianism, but the Congregational polity implies a trinitarian faith in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Without the reality of the Presence of Christ and the operation of His Spirit as the source and security of the continuity of the Church, Congregationalism has no meaning, and a Congregational church becomes a club of more or less devout persons for mutual benefit.

2. This conception may, however, be described as an ideal to which actuality does not correspond. Is not the apostolic succession in the historic episcopate also an ideal, to which actuality has not always corresponded? Have bishops always and everywhere followed in the footsteps of the Apostles? Far be it from me to claim infallibility or perfection for Congregationalism. It has had the defects of its qualities: independence has sometimes sunk into isolation, autonomy into the tyranny of the many or the few, liberty into licence. But the closer association of the churches is tending to correct these faults. On the whole, and I know it thoroughly, it works as well as, allowing for the imperfections of human nature, any system could be expected to work. It does undoubtedly assume in the members of the church a religious experience and moral character as Christian believers, such as a system which does not trust the Christian people, but keeps them in tutelage, does not demand; but should this be a reproach against it? Partial failure in realizing a lofty ideal is better than entire success in reaching a low aim. Is it not a service to all Christendom

to assert and maintain the possibility of such a Presence of Christ and such an operation of His Spirit in every local congregation as the manifestation of the one Church, as Congregationalism assumes ?

IV

Having defined the ecclesiastical principles of Congregationalism, and having indicated its theological justification, I may now describe its application in details.

I. As Congregationalism assumes the constant Presence of Christ and continued operation of His Spirit in the church, it refuses to be bound by subscription to a creed, as an authoritative statement of what is believed. It has no objection whatever to a declaration of faith as a witness to the world when there is occasion for it. Thus a 'Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters' was 'adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, May 1833'; but the Preliminary Notes carefully guard this action against misunderstanding:—

'(4) It is not intended that the following statement should be put forth with any authority, or as the standard to which assent should be required. (5) Disallowing the utility of creeds and articles of religion as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them, reserving to every one the most perfect liberty of conscience. (6) Upon some minor points of doctrine and practice they, differing among themselves, allow to each other the right to form an unbiassed judgement of the Word of God. (7) They wish it to be observed that, notwithstanding their jealousy of subscription to creeds and articles, and their disapproval of the imposition of any human standard, whether of faith or discipline, they are far more agreed in their doctrines and practices than any Church which enjoins subscription and enforces a human standard of orthodoxy; and

they believe that there is no minister and no church among them that would deny the substance of any one of the following doctrines of religion though each might prefer to state his sentiments in his own way.'

Although the agreement may not be quite so close to-day as it was in 1833 in view of the great theological changes through which all the churches have passed, yet the claim is substantially true. The insistence on personal faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord keeps Congregational ministers and churches united as no common creed has, or can. I am confident that Congregationalism stands to-day for a *Liberal Evangelicalism*, which preserves the permanent and universal substance of the Christian Gospel, while adapting its expression to the changing needs of the age. During the 'New Theology' controversy a statement was issued in correction of its errors, which all the ex-chairmen of the Union and all the Principals of the Theological Colleges voluntarily subscribed. The Congregational Union on joining the Federal Council of the Free Churches accepted the Declaration of the Faith common to the churches so associated. When a minister is ordained he makes a statement regarding his religious experience, his sense of divine call to the ministry, his adherence to Congregationalism, his message, and his methods of work. Did that statement show any wide divergence from the common faith, he would not be ordained, although I have never heard of such an instance. As one who with much regret and reluctance left Presbyterianism on account of its demand for creed-subscription, I entirely accept the historical Congregational position. In any future plans of Reunion, all a Congregationalist could consistently do would be to signify his approval of the Nicene or Apostles' Creed as historical documents, setting forth for the time to which they belong in its proper language the substance of the common Christian Faith which he himself now holds, but would now express differently as the times demand.

2. In respect to worship, each congregation is free to adopt what forms it pleases; but nevertheless there is

a surprising measure of uniformity. While a book of Congregational Worship has been provided, its use is by no means common, and aversion from a liturgy of any kind prevails in most of the congregations. This aversion may be traced, not merely to custom, but to the conviction that, as the Spirit is present and active in the worshipping community, His guidance is to be sought for each occasion, and that the use of forms would be a relapse from the freedom of the Spirit. With a view to a closer Christian fellowship with the Church of England, some Congregationalists are trying to school themselves to like set forms of prayer. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are observed : on their significance, difference of opinion must be admitted. Some regard ' Infant Baptism ' as the dedication of the child to God by the parents ; others regard it as the claim by the church of the child for God, and also the assurance (sign and seal) that the Grace of Christ (the enlightening, quickening and renewing of His Spirit) is available for the child as the parents, teachers, &c., nurture the child for the Lord. It need hardly be said that no doctrine of baptismal regeneration is held.

I. To the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper great importance is attached. In the Congregational Churches of Scotland in the earlier part of last century there was a weekly observance, as the aim was to follow apostolic precedents as closely as possible. Now the usual practice in Scotland as well as England is a monthly or fortnightly observance at the close of the morning or evening worship alternately. A monthly attendance is expected ; and some churches even have the rule that a member absent for six months from the Table may be removed from the roll of membership. While some ministers hold that the Ordinance is primarily commemorative and lay stress on its symbolic character in opposition to what they regard as superstitious sacramentarian views, others, among whom was Dr. Dale, in my judgement the greatest leader of Congregationalism during the last century, held a high view of the Lord's Own Presence with believers in their remembrance of His death. I myself hold that the Ordinance may, where human faith responds to Divine

Grace in the Presence of the Saviour and Lord, become not only a symbol but a channel of the gifts of Christ. The believer may be enlightened, refreshed, strengthened by his communion with the Lord. But I lay no stress, and I know no Congregationalist who does, on the Presence of the Body, as is done in the doctrine of transubstantiation, or consubstantiation. It is the whole Personality of Christ present and active that blesses the believer. Personally I should have no objection to, nay even a preference for, a rite of admission to the full membership of the Church, corresponding to Confirmation, so long as the administration was not confined to the Bishop.

2. As regards the vexed question of Ordination, there was a time in 'the dissidence of dissent' when some Congregationalists objected to the ordinance, but now it may be said to be the universal practice, and much more care is being given to a seemly and orderly administration. The Principal of the College where the ordinand was trained gives him the charge, the Moderator of the Province often gives the charge to the Church; the ordination prayer is offered by either the ordinand's own pastor, or by a representative of the neighbouring Congregational churches, or the County Union. Laying on of hands is not usual, but there would now not be general opposition to the practice. Some very logical Independents held that the ordination was that of a pastor of a particular Congregation, so that if a change of pastorate took place, re-ordination would be necessary; but this was never the general view. The ordination is commonly regarded as not merely to the pastorate of a Congregational Church, or even to the Congregational Ministry, but to the ministry of the one Church of Jesus Christ. Hence the proposal of re-ordination as the condition of obtaining a wider commission is offensive to the conscience, and hurts the feelings of most Congregational ministers; for they believe that they have been ordained to a universal ministry, that the Lord Himself has given them the widest commission, as ministers not of a sect, but of His one Church. Students for the ministry, and even laymen are allowed to preach, and even in necessity to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but the tendency

is to assimilate Congregational practice to that of other denominations with regard to the administration of the Sacrament. The value of a trained and ordained ministry is being more generally recognized, and ministers themselves seem to be thinking more highly of the functions and responsibilities of their calling. To preaching the Gospel as the greatest of the means of Grace, Congregationalism still attaches more importance than does the Church of England.

3. As regards the polity, while self-government is still claimed for every local congregation, the absolute autonomy once insisted on is being voluntarily modified. A number of village churches are often dependent on a town-church financially, or several such village churches are grouped together under one minister. No aided church can call a minister who is not approved by the County Union. No minister is on the list of Congregational ministers unless his credentials have been accepted by the County Union, and in cases which raise any doubt or difficulty, by a Committee representative of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. A church may claim to be Congregational, which is itself not recognized by the Union, or the minister of which is not recognized ; but such a church will not have fellowship with other churches. As regards the support of the ministry, the church recognized and approved, where necessary, is aided financially by the County Union, and from a Central Fund. The Association of the Congregational Churches is always becoming closer, and their co-operation includes a widening range of interests and activities, without the loss of any such independence as a church may consistently with the Congregational principle claim, for, as I have tried to show, that principle lays stress on the indivisible unity of the Church.

V

In closing, a few words regarding the prospect of reunion may be added. As Congregationalism believes that there is only one Church of Christ, and can be one alone, as it sets up no other limit to that Church than faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, as it regards its churches

as local manifestations and operations of that Church, it has in itself no barriers to the widest possible Christian fellowship. I am prepared to remember the Lord's dying love with any believer in His grace, and to preach His gospel not only in any Christian church, but also, if I had the opportunity, in Jewish synagogue as Paul did, Moham-medan mosque, or pagan temple. Some Congregationalists would accept an Episcopate, constitutional and representative of the Christian people, so long as they were not expected in so accepting to acquiesce in a theory of *apostolic succession*, which would make the Bishop exclusively a channel of any special grace, and so long as the equality of all ministers of Christ, and the liberty of all believers in the Lord were adequately safeguarded. It is because the proposal of re-ordination by a bishop involves acceptance of such a theory of the episcopate that it at present offers an insuperable obstacle. If intercommunion and interchange of pulpits must wait till that demand is accepted, much as we desire these tokens of Christian fellowship, we must forgo that privilege. To meet the scruples of those who do not regard our ministry as regular or valid, we dare not sacrifice our conviction that Christ Himself has made our congregations churches as manifestations of the Church, and has given these churches a ministry and sacraments He accepts, approves, and blesses.

IV

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM

By the Rev. C. RYDER SMITH, B.A., D.D.

Tutor in Systematic Theology, Richmond College

THE birthday of Methodism is easily fixed. It was born on May 24, 1738. On that day a man, already thirty-four years of age, went 'very unwillingly' as he says, 'to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans'. 'About a quarter before nine', to continue the quotation—when the reader reached the point where Luther describes the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ—'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.' To-day there are not a few historians who count that event the greatest in the eighteenth century. Perhaps a contemporary's account of it may be given for the sake of contrast. At the time John Wesley was the guest of a Mr. and Mrs. Hutton, who were old friends of his brother, Samuel Wesley, junior. A few days after May 24, Mrs. Hutton wrote a letter to Samuel, saying, 'Your brother John seems to be turned a wild enthusiast, or fanatic, and to our very great affliction, is drawing our two children into these wild notions by their great opinion of Mr. John's sanctity and judgement.' So the lady goes on to implore John's elder brother either 'to confine or convert Mr. John', for she is sure that when Samuel hears of his brother's behaviour, he will conclude that he is 'a not quite right man'. But it was beyond the power of Samuel Wesley, or of any other man, to

'confine or convert' the new fanatic. To-day the community of Churches that trace their origin to John Wesley's 'strangely warmed heart' is the largest community of Protestant Christians in the world.¹ To different Churches different things seem fundamental. Some count a common creed fundamental, some a common form of government, some the Sacraments, some the Scriptures. Methodism finds a place for all of these, but for it a Church is primarily a company of people who share a common experience of God in Christ.

I say 'a company of people', for the year 1739 saw the beginning of that 'United Society' which has grown into the Methodist Church. Wesley defined this Society as 'a company of men, having the form, and seeking the power, of godliness', and laid down a single condition of admission, 'A desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from [one's] sins.' These are eighteenth-century phrases, but they have a twentieth-century meaning. Methodism is thought by some to be a narrow sect, but its 'condition of membership' is the broadest in the world. It asks only one question of any man who wishes to share its membership, 'Do you want to live the Christian life?' If a man can say 'Yes' to that question, and if he so behaves as to show that the 'Yes' is genuine, he may become and remain a member of the Methodist Church. The habit of counting 'evangelical experience' as a kind of enthusiasm continued long after the days of Mrs. Hutton, but it has now had its time. William James's 'Varieties of Religious Experience' is only one of many tokens that the world of thought to-day accepts the reality of Christian experience. It is now a thing to be explained, not to be 'explained away'. Further, it was no accident that on that great day in Aldersgate Street, Wesley's heart was 'strangely warmed' as some one was reading a preface of Luther to an Epistle of Paul. Paul—Luther—Wesley: *there* is an evangelical succession. If any want to know what Wesley meant by 'Christian experience', let him discover what Paul meant by such

¹ It is estimated that there are from thirty to forty millions of Methodists in the world. By far the greater part are in the United States.

a phrase as this—‘Christ in me, the hope of glory.’ For the Evangelical is always a mystic.

Perhaps some one will say ‘Surely this emphasis upon experience lends itself to subjectivism in religion, and issues in all sorts of spiritual vagaries’. As matter of fact, it has not done so, for since Wesley’s death in 1791 Methodism has not had a single serious doctrinal controversy, but has, as it were naturally, confessed the common Christian creed. There have been two chief reasons for this. One is the emphasis Methodism lays upon fellowship. This found its first expression in the Class Meeting. Ideally a Class Meeting is a gathering of Christians who ‘build each other up’ in the spiritual life. It has always been hard to reach this ideal, as indeed it is hard to reach any ideal, yet the endeavour has often been successfully made. It is clear that, if Christians try to share a common fellowship, a vagary is less likely to live. And then, secondly, Methodism has always been careful to compare the experience of the Christian of to-day with the classic instance of Christian experience in the New Testament. While it asks no creed of its *members*, it does ask the consent of its *Ministers* to the Evangelical faith as set forth in the New Testament.¹ The Methodist Ministry has a common Gospel. And the Methodist people accept the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed without difficulty because those Creeds epitomize the teaching of the New Testament on the subjects of which they treat. As for the so-called Athanasian Creed, many Methodists do not so much as know that there is an Athanasian Creed.

But I said ‘The Methodist Ministry’, and I notice that one of the subjects named in the letter of invitation that reached me is ‘The theory of the Ministry’. Well, here again, the theory is best understood in relation to the history. You will remember that good Mrs. Hutton complained that the new fanatic, John Wesley, was ‘drawing’ her children into ‘his wild notions’. This

¹ In the Wesleyan Church both Ministers and Local Preachers are asked to consent to the ‘system of doctrine generally contained’ in a volume of Wesley’s Sermons and in his ‘Notes on the New Testament’.

is typical of the things that the said John proceeded everywhere to do. The sequel was those fifty years of ceaseless itinerancy through these islands which is one of the most amazing physical feats in the annals of man. Mr. Birrell, who has some knowledge of the rush and stress of the few weeks of a General Election in politics, says that for half a century Wesley conducted an election through the length and breadth of England on behalf of Jesus Christ. Why? One of my predecessors at Richmond will tell you. He was a great authority on the hymns of the Wesleys. Once he was asked to quote a verse that expressed the spirit of Methodism. Said he, 'I will do it in a line—"O let me commend my Saviour to you!"' He who has a 'strangely warmed' heart wishes that other hearts should be warmed too. So the real Methodist is inevitably an evangelist. Wherever the first Methodist Evangelists went, others learnt to 'know Him whom they had believed', and forthwith they passed on their discovery. And wherever there was such a group of people, Wesley drew them into a Class Meeting, and they became part of the 'United Society'. But what happened to them when he was not there to 'lead the meeting'? Ah! careful man, before he left he chose the one who had most grace and most sense and appointed him 'Leader'. A simple and obvious thing! Yes, but it meant that there was entrusted to hundreds of laymen the 'cure of souls'. Then something else happened. While Wesley was away somewhere in the wilds of the Provinces, a young fellow called Maxfield, who was one of the Leaders of the Society in London, began to preach. He seems to have passed almost insensibly from such exhortation as was usual in Leaders to a set discourse. Wesley took alarm and hastened back to London to close his mouth. On arrival there, however, he chanced first to see his mother, Susanna Wesley. She was a strict High Church woman. But she looked at her son and said, 'John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as truly called of God to preach as you are.' Then something followed that is typical of

many things that Wesley did. He heard Maxfield preach, examined the results of his preaching, and exclaimed, 'It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good'. At this moment, in the Wesleyan Methodist Church alone, there are about twenty thousand lay preachers. No Church, I think, has found such scope for the spiritual gifts of the laity as Methodism.

But Methodists do not usually call those twenty thousand 'Lay Preachers' but 'Local Preachers'. Why? There were a few clergy of the Anglican Church who threw in their lot with the two Wesleys and Whitefield, but the number of people who welcomed their Gospel and crowded to hear it was far too great for these few to care for. So Wesley selected certain of the lay preachers and sent them to preach and care for the 'Societies' in different parts of the country. As their work meant that they had ceaselessly to 'travel' about a given area or 'Circuit', they were called 'Travelling Preachers', while those who still pursued 'secular' callings and only preached occasionally in the neighbourhood of their homes, were called 'Local Preachers'. And the 'Travelling Preacher' of Wesley's day has become the Methodist Minister of to-day. The story of the evolution is rather the story of what the Methodist people have claimed for their ministers than of what the ministers have claimed for themselves. For instance, I have said nothing about the administration of the Sacraments. At first the 'Preachers' let this alone. Wesley taught his people to take the Sacraments at the Parish Church. I do not wish to stir old controversies, but I think I may safely say that, on the one hand, some Methodists were not very willing to go to the Parish Church, and, on the other hand, sometimes Methodists were not made welcome if they did go. And, in effect, the 'Societies' said, 'The Methodist Preacher is our father in God; he is to us the Minister of Christ in every other way; we wish that he shall be Christ's Minister and ours in this way also'. So here Wesley and his people were in opposition to each other! The demand of the people grew louder as Wesley grew older. It is pathetic to watch the old man fighting on indomitably, for Wesley never gave way to any one

but God. It is more pathetic to see him giving way more than once, as he thought, to God, and himself ordaining a few Ministers to administer the Sacraments, first in America, then in Scotland, and at last in England too. The ultimate issue was not really doubtful. The controversy that reverence for him partly held in check, broke out vehemently at his death, but I need not tell you the end. For more than a hundred years the Methodist Minister has fulfilled for the Methodist people every function of the Minister of Christ. You will notice that the question has never been ' Shall there be Sacraments ? ' but ' From whom shall they be received ? ' And I ought to add one more remark. To-day every Methodist Minister is ' ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery ', but for some thirty years after Wesley's death this was not so. Yet during that time Methodist Ministers administered the Sacraments. Such is the history of the Methodist Ministry. What theory of the Sacraments and Ministry does it imply ? Clearly only one. The Methodist believes that a Sacrament is ' an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace ', but he believes too that it is the grace that validates the sign, and not the sign that validates the grace. Similarly, in a Christian Minister Methodism asks only two things, a Christian's own conviction that he is ' called ' by Christ to be a Minister, and the Church's conviction that he is so called. Yet it puts its Ministers to severe tests. In my own Church there is normally a period of nine years of trial and preparation between the day when a young fellow first preaches as a Local Preacher and the day when he is ordained as a Minister. Ordination is the Church's recognition of the ' call ' of a Minister and its consequent bestowal of authority upon him.

This leads to another question, the Methodist theory of Church government and organization. Here I had better say that in this country there are three Methodist Churches of considerable size,¹ while in America there

¹ These are the ' Wesleyan Methodists ', the ' Primitive Methodists ', and the ' United Methodists '. Each name, taken alone, might suggest mistaken conclusions. In Wales there is a fourth considerable Church, the so-called ' Calvinistic Methodist '.

are six. On the other side of the Atlantic the great ground of division was slavery. On this side it has been the method of Church government. On both sides of the water serious attempts to reunite are being made. Such attempts have already succeeded in Australasia, Canada, and Ireland. Probably the most striking thing about Methodist Church order, at least to a casual observer, is its variety. For instance, the British Methodists use an organization that is more like the Presbyterian than any other, but the American Methodists use a kind of Episcopacy. And both run back to Wesley! Yet, in spite of the differences, there are two convictions about Church government that the Methodist Churches hold in common. What are these?

A good many years ago I was Minister in a country Circuit in a remote part of the Cotswolds. A distinguished Nonconformist divine from London came to instruct the Free Churches of the neighbourhood. He told us that the Anglican, the Congregational, and the Presbyterian Churches each had its own theory of Church order, and that each claimed to trace its own order in the New Testament Church, but that the Methodists—and here he turned with a quiet smile to me—had no distinctive theory of Church organization. Now, in part he was right, but on the whole he was wrong. Some of you will have noticed already that a philosopher would say that in many ways Methodism is 'Pragmatist'. This is peculiarly true of Church government. The Methodist does not believe that the New Testament prescribes any form of Church order for subsequent times, but that any form is legitimate which at a particular time and place best promises to serve the purposes of the Kingdom of God. So Methodist organization is subject to change. In this country it began with the benevolent autocracy of Wesley. Long before he died, however, he gathered round him a 'Conference' of Ministers, and to a selected hundred of these his power passed at his death. Yet, in the very document that authorized the transfer, he advised the hundred to call their brethren, the other Ministers, to join them in government, and this they at once proceeded to do. Then, at first informally and ultimately formally,

a lay element was added. The English divisions of Methodism arose largely in disputes about the degree of this lay element. In the Wesleyan Church there has been continuous development of lay power, along with the retention of certain pastoral powers to Ministers. But the justification of every change has been 'Pragmatic'. The ruling question has been, 'Will the proposed change serve the Kingdom of Christ?' In a young Church, whose members have not yet learnt the advantages of unity and continuity, this Pragmatic theory of organization led too easily to divisions. But it will be clear that it readily admits reunion too. For Methodists are coming to see that a united Church is far more likely to serve the Kingdom of God than a disunited one.

Yet there is something else too. With all this variety in organization there is a certain likeness. I have said that Methodism emphasizes the fellowship of Christians. This is usually illustrated from the Class Meeting, but it is not exhausted there. It shows itself in government. We have our own technical term to express this—we say that Methodist systems are 'Connexional'. For instance, I have used the word 'Circuit'. A 'Circuit' is a group of churches. Its governing body is a 'Quarterly Meeting' that represents every church in the group. In a single group there may easily be a suburban church, a 'downtown' church, and a country village church. The Circuit is served by a group of Ministers, who are unitedly responsible for its churches. The support of the Ministers falls to the whole group. So 'the strong help the weak' and one type of church life supplements another. But this is only one instance of the 'Connexional system'. The Circuits are in turn grouped in Districts. Every year in May their representatives gather in 'Synods'. Here again the principle of mutual help enters. Finally, the Districts are grouped, for they all send representatives to the Conference, which is the ultimate authority. In the work of the Conference the 'Connexional principle' is found everywhere. For instance, it controls the Foreign Missionary work of the Church, to which every single Methodist congregation, as a matter of course, contributes. Similarly it controls, through its 'Pastoral' session—for

the Wesleyan Church reserves some things for Ministers—the supply and training of Ministers. Or, again, the Ordination of Ministers takes place at Conference. So a Methodist Minister is not a Minister of any particular congregation, but of the whole Church. Another result of ‘Connexionalism’ is that no Minister is ever without a Circuit, nor any Circuit without a Minister, for the Conference appoints some Minister to every Circuit. It ought to be added that a Circuit may ‘invite’ any particular Minister, and that, in nine cases out of ten, the Conference sends to a Circuit the Minister it has ‘invited’. Again, Methodism comes nearer equality in the ‘allowances’ it gives its Ministers than any other great Church. Or again, the large Mission Halls, which are perhaps the best known mark of Methodism in English cities to-day, are only possible because the whole Methodist Church recognizes a united responsibility for the great centres of population. At the present moment we are busy raising £150,000 in order to maintain and extend our work in the parts of London that the wealthier classes have deserted. Or, once again, the Methodist Ministry is an ‘itinerant’ Ministry. The old rule was that no Minister could stay in one Circuit more than three years. This rigid rule is gradually relaxing, but the Methodist Church remains convinced there is usually an advantage, both to churches and Ministers, in fairly frequent change. One result of this interchange of Ministers is that the sense of the unity of the Church, and of the unity of the Ministry, is peculiarly strong in Methodism. Our Church government is permeated by the spirit of fellowship.

There is, I think, but one more subject on which I was asked to say a word—the type of worship. Here, again, the philosophic word is best—in its ways of worship Methodism is ‘Pragmatic’. It suits its methods to the different kinds of churches. It will adopt any method that best leads a church into the presence of God. In some suburban churches we still use the Anglican Order of Morning Service. The use of the Te Deum and other ancient canticles is more common. In a great Mission Hall a sheet of popular hymns is often printed every week for the Sunday’s use. Everywhere, however, there are

certain constant elements—the reading of Scripture, extempore Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, a sermon, the singing of hymns, and the Apostolic Benediction. Not the least of these is the singing of hymns. For Charles Wesley's hymns express as distinctively as John Wesley's sermons that which is fundamental in Methodism, the reality and primacy of Christian experience. May I quote two verses of a hymn which was written by Charles Wesley within a day or two of his own and his brother's conversion, and which our Conference was singing when the Archbishop of York visited it last year to present the Lambeth Proposals?

And can it be that I should gain
 An interest in the Saviour's blood?
 Died He for me who caused His pain?
 For me, who Him to death pursued?
 Amazing love, how can it be
 That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above,
 So free, so infinite His grace!
 Emptied Himself of all but love,
 And bled for Adam's helpless race:
 'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
 For, O my God, it found out me!

More than any other one thing, *that* is Methodism.

V

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

By EDWARD GRUBB, M.A.

I FEEL deeply the honour, and at the same time the responsibility, of being invited to speak for the Society of Friends in this series of addresses on 'What the Churches stand for'. The fact that you wish to hear something about the Quakers marks the progress we have made since the seventeenth century, when an Anglican clergyman defined them as 'a sect lately bred as vermin out of the putrid matter and corruptions of former times', and when the saintly Richard Baxter, in his *Quaker's Catechism* (published in 1659), wrote, 'Was there ever a generation of men on whom the image of the Devil was more visible than on these [Quakers]?'

My own experience has been very different from that of my spiritual forefathers of the seventeenth century. Some years ago when I was president of a local Free Church Council, I was invited to speak on Sunday evenings to several of the Nonconformist congregations in the town on 'the Message of the Society of Friends to its sister Churches'; and a number of persons quite spontaneously said to me afterwards: 'Why, that is exactly what we believe ourselves.' And, when I had written a little book on *Authority and the Light Within*, some of the warmest commendations I received were from High Church Anglicans.

There is undoubtedly, beneath all our differences, an underlying unity—a fellowship of those who seek the same truth, worship the same Lord, know some measure of the same Christian experience, and desire to follow in the same way of life. To bring to the surface of consciousness this underlying unity is surely the true path

towards the Reunion of Christendom ; and such opportunities as are afforded by this course of lectures, for gaining mutual knowledge and understanding, appear to me to be of priceless worth.

There was in my judgement deep truth in the words used by the Anglican Bishops in their Encyclical Letter from the Lambeth Conference in 1920 :

‘ In this Appeal we urge [all Christian people] to try a new approach to reunion ; to adopt a new point of view ; to look up to the reality as it is in God. *The unity which we seek exists.* It is in God, who is the perfection of unity, the one Father, the one Lord, the one Spirit, who gives life to the one Body. Again, the one Body exists. It needs not to be made, nor to be re-made, but to become organic and visible. Once more, the fellowship of the one Body exists. It is the work of God, not of man. We have only to discover it, and to set free its activities.’

(Report of Lambeth Conference, p. 12.)

I believe that the Society of Friends has something to say along these lines. The Quakers have often been thought of as a divisive and exclusive body, arrogantly claiming that they alone were right and all other Christians wrong. There may be a foundation for this idea, when we study their efforts in controversy, in which I am afraid they sometimes gave measure for measure. Perhaps they were too much like the Scotchman who agreed that ‘ without controversy great is the mystery of godliness ’, but thought that *with controversy* it was all quite plain and there was no mystery whatever. But there is another side. In the writings of the early Quakers you will find many passages which breathe the spirit of unity with all true Christians whatever label they may bear. Isaac Penington, the mystic, who became a Quaker in 1658, writes, when expostulating with the Government of Massachusetts for its persecution of the Quakers, in which four of them were put to death for preaching their religion :

‘ How sweet and pleasant it is to the truly spiritual eye to see several sorts of believers, several forms of

Christians, in the school of Christ, every one learning their own lesson, performing their own peculiar service, and knowing, owning and loving one another in their several places and different performances to their Master, to whom they are to give an account, and not to quarrel with one another about their different practices. *For this is the true ground of love and unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same spirit and life in him.*

(Works, Third Edition, 1784, i. 444.)

Similarly William Penn wrote in his *Fruits of Solitude* :

‘ The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion ; and when Death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers.’

I think the Society of Friends stands, in part, for this belief in Unity, and has a contribution to make to the search for the true path to Reunion. At present this is being sought mainly by trying to find agreement on Creeds and methods of Church order and administration. We believe there is a deeper and more fruitful way. In a pamphlet on ‘ The True Basis of Christian Unity ’, drawn up by a committee of our yearly meeting, and recommended to its members in 1917, this passage occurs :

‘ We conceive of Christianity, not as a collection of “ notions ” or doctrines, and a number of traditional observances ; but as essentially an experience, and a way of life based on that experience. Christian Unity for us consists, not in agreement in ideas and practices, but in *a common Christian experience*, apart from which neither doctrines nor practices appear to us to have meaning or value. . . . It consists in the One Divine Life that is reproducing in [Christians] the character of the historic Person, Jesus Christ ; which, while it is something far deeper than any definition of His Person, is for Christians the final manifestation of the character

of God Himself. "The glory which Thou hast given me I have given them, that they all may be one."

'In our judgement it is essential that in any movement towards greater unity, Christian experience should receive the main emphasis at the outset, and that any reference to common beliefs or practices of worship should be so made as to show explicitly their foundation in religious experience.'

We think that 'what we stand for' is in part the conviction that the essence of Christianity is to be found, not in formulated beliefs or methods of worship or of Church organization, but in a common experience and a common service of men.

What else the Society of Friends stands for may be best seen by looking at its origin. The Quaker movement began in the middle of the seventeenth century—a time when the early hopes of the Reformation had been largely disappointed. The Reformation had begun with the recovery of the consciousness of personal access to God through faith in Christ, apart from the institutions of the organized Church. As Auguste Sabatier says :

'Luther found salvation in ignoring the institution, and entering into personal, direct and immediate relations with the Master of souls and the Author of life and grace.' (*Religions of Authority*, &c., p. 151.)

But the glow of this early experience faded, and the successors of the first Reformers, faced with a double conflict, against Rome and against the Anabaptists, took up the weapon readiest to their hands ; and set up, in place of the infallible authority of the organized Church, the authority of an infallible 'Word of God' which they thought they found in the Canon of Scripture. In name the Reformed Churches still held to the inward authority of the Spirit, but in practice this was often ignored and forgotten. A new Scholasticism arose, in which God was thought of as far away from men, as having spoken to them in earlier days, when the Bible was being written, but as now silent. Along with this there was a doctrine of rigid Predestination, from which the tender Fatherhood

of God had almost totally disappeared ; and a doctrine of Justification, which seemed to many to be based on a Divine fiction, and to make practical rightness of life a secondary matter.

It was in days when these doctrines were sounding forth from the pulpits, to which, as Milton wrote in *Lycidas*, 'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed,' that George Fox, a half-educated shepherd lad, came forth with what he claimed as a new discovery of the Christian life. He has left us, in the early pages of his *Journal*, a poignant piece of self-disclosure, which may be warmly commended to all who are interested in 'the varieties of religious experience'. Having failed entirely to get help from men in the inner torment of his soul, not so much because of his own sins as because of the evil and darkness of the world, he tells us that at last he heard a voice which said : 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' The inward and vital help which he could not find from men or from churches came to him, he believed, direct from God Himself. And in the strength and joy of this new experience he went out to find the multitudes of 'Seekers', who were longing for a prophet to arise and speak to them with an authentic voice from God ; and many of them he turned into 'Finders'. His favourite message was, he says, that 'God' or 'Christ'—he uses the words naïvely, with no apparent difference of meaning—'has come to teach His people Himself.' What Prof. Harnack has said about Jesus Christ might in measure be said with truth about George Fox also : 'Individual religious life was what He wanted to kindle, and what He did kindle ; it is His peculiar greatness to have led men to God, so that they may thenceforth live their own life with Him.' (*What is Christianity?* pp. 11, 12.) As I have written elsewhere :

'Fox came with no new theology, woven by processes of thought ; no lore of schoolmen, gained from the study of books ; no dream of a coming catastrophe, when the proud should be overturned and the saints should rule the earth. He simply told men that Christ

had met him ; that He had satisfied his inward hunger with the bread of His living presence ; and that what he had found they could find also. They need not seek to find God through the words of learned divines or man-made preachers ; for He Himself was present with His light and truth in the depths of every human heart, and would reveal Himself to all who would but listen and obey.' (*The History and Witness of Evangelical Christianity*, chapter on the Society of Friends.)

The sanity and sobriety of the young preacher, his deep knowledge of the Scriptures, and the insight with which he expounded them, convinced many that he was right, and they too reached a consciousness of inward revelation.

' These things (he writes) I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter [of Scripture] though they are written in the letter ; but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God by whom the Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the Holy Scriptures, but they were very precious to me ; for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth ; and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them.' (*Journal*, i. 36.)

All those who were ' convinced of Truth ' claimed that what they had found was not a ' notion ' about God or Christ, but *the reality itself*, opened to them by direct revelation to their own souls. They therefore believed themselves to be in the true succession of prophets and apostles ; revelation and inspiration were not of the past alone but of the present also. What saved them (on the whole) from extravagance was their strong sense of the *ethical* ' fruits of the Spirit ' ; by the Spirit they lived, and by the Spirit they strove to ' walk in line '. When George Fox was brought before the magistrates at Derby in 1649, he says ' they ran into many words ; but I told them *they were not to dispute of God and Christ*

but to obey Him'. (*Journal*, i. 50.) This is characteristic and illuminating: the essential doctrines of Christianity were not denied but were made secondary to right living. The mysticism of Fox and his followers was a very *practical* mysticism.

The early Quakers were horribly persecuted, but they were hardly ever charged with immorality. The accusations brought against them were 'blasphemy and infidelity' because they would not call the Bible 'the Word of God'; they were said to be Papists in disguise, for the same reason; they were charged with disloyalty to the Government because (on grounds of conscience) they would not take the oath of allegiance, or any other oath; they were punished for contempt of court because they retained their hats in the presence of magistrates and judges, declining to pay them an honour which, it was believed, should be reserved for God alone. Their honesty of purpose so impressed their persecutors that they were often transferred from one prison to another without a guard, on their bare promise to appear.

Now, what are we to make of their central affirmation of the Light within their souls, the Light that is, potentially at least, in the souls of all men? Their language is often confused and vague; it was misunderstood in their own day and it is so still.

It meant, in the first place, if we may express it in modern terms, *an intuitive perception of spiritual truth*: truth, that is, concerning the reality of God, the character of Jesus, and the way of life He requires from us as disciples. This was to them as direct and immediate as is our perception of the beauty of a picture or the excellence of a character; we must discern the value for ourselves if we are to see it at all. But this involved the consequence that the basis and seat of authority in religion was transferred from without to within; truth was to be believed, not because Church or Bible pronounced it true, but because it was inwardly 'seen' to be true.

In the second place, it meant an experience of *Guidance* by the Spirit of God in all the affairs of life—a Guidance which was to be known on condition of obedience. By

this was meant something more than the 'natural conscience', though the Quakers often appealed to conscience as *evidence* of a Light in all men. That there is a difference is obvious; for many Christians look for and believe they experience Guidance in matters that are morally indifferent. But the difference was never satisfactorily explained.

There was, it is certain, no thought of denying the reality of Sin, or the need of Atonement and Redemption. But the Quakers always maintained that this must be an *inward* work, changing the man himself into what God required; they could not regard it as an outward or 'forensic' transaction, still less as a piece of make-believe. It was Sin that blinded the eyes of men to the Light within them, and Sin must be effectively removed if the Light were to shine undimmed.

Nor was there any thought of denying the reality and importance of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The affirmation of the 'Christ within' did not mean denial of the 'Christ without'—though some expressions used by the Quakers show that their thoughts were not always clear. Essentially their position was in line with the mysticism of Paul and of the author of the Fourth Gospel: the Light in their souls was, they believed, Christ re-living His own life in the souls of His true followers. Their mysticism was, in the real sense of the word, *evangelical* as well as practical.

As to the Bible, they accepted it as inspired, but they would not call it 'the Word of God', because for them it was not the *final* 'rule' of faith and duty. The Spirit that inspired was above the Scripture, and inspired men still if they would seek it and obey. Only as they shared in the inspiration of the Biblical writers could men truly understand the Scriptures or use them aright. Hence, it may be, the Society of Friends has on the whole been less disturbed than some other Christians by the new light thrown on the Bible by methods of critical study.

There is, however, room for legitimate criticism of their presentation of the principle of the Light within. The experience was real, the explanation was faulty. The early Quakers never transcended the 'dualistic' philosophy which prevailed in their time, and which made a rigid

separation between the natural and the supernatural, the human and the Divine. They also accepted, as absolutely as did the Reformers, the idea that man was totally ruined by the 'Fall'. It was not possible for them to think of the 'Light' as *at once human and Divine*; it must be one or other. If they made it human, this meant that man could save himself without Divine Grace. Such an idea they rejected with horror; and so they found themselves shut up to the belief that it was purely Divine. But this meant that each man, in so far as he experienced and followed the Light, became infallible.

On this rock of personal infallibility the Quaker movement nearly went to pieces, even in Fox's day. It was saved by his own practical common sense and that of others; but the difficulty was never philosophically overcome, and has been in my judgement the source of most of our troubles as a religious body. It led directly, as Dr. Rufus Jones has powerfully shown in his recent volumes on 'The Later Periods of Quakerism', to the *Quietism* that marked our history in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and almost extinguished us as a people. Quietism strove to magnify the Divine by reducing the human to nothing. 'The creature' could do nothing good, 'the Creator' must do all. No movement for preaching or religious teaching could be encouraged or even allowed unless it was manifestly of supernatural origin. Hence the work of the ministry came to be confined to a few persons of exceptional psychical qualities, and religious teaching was neglected. Fear of the human mind—the dread lest Reason should obstruct the Spirit—has been, in my judgement, the main cause of the poor success of Quakerism. Happily, we are beginning to learn that there is no such necessary opposition between the light and guidance of the Spirit and a right use of human reason.

Let us turn from criticism to observe some practical workings of the principle of the Light within. While all Christians, I suppose, hold this principle in some measure, the Quakers' faith in it was distinguishable in two ways. First, they *trusted* the Light more fully

than most other Christians, and made it the basis of their whole Church polity. This revolutionized their mode of worship and their ideas of ministry. Second, they assumed that (in measure at least) the Light was available for *all men*, and not for Christians only. This profoundly affected their outlook on human life and the duties of men and nations to one another.

(a) In the matter of *public Worship and the Ministry*, they adhered to practices which had already been adopted by some of the Seekers, and (I believe) by the Familists, or 'Family of Love', founded in the sixteenth century by Henry Nicholas. They began their worship by *silent waiting on God*, without any human leader or director, leaving freedom for the Spirit to guide them. They had no separated clergy and no fixed order of service. Their ministry was wholly a *lay* ministry, open to every member who might feel an inward call to speak or lead in vocal prayer—open, therefore, to women quite equally with men. Wherever two or three true seekers after God could meet together, in a private room or even in the open air, there worship could be carried on. There was no need to wait for a minister, and no question of precedence in conducting the worship could arise.

This is our most cherished 'difference'. People often wonder how it can possibly conduce to edification, but it does. Difficulties, of course, there were and are. In the early days there were troubles with 'Ranters' and others, who were inclined to abuse the liberty of a Quaker meeting to air their views. These difficulties, however, were transcended where there was vigorous spiritual life among those who came together. Unhelpful utterances were largely brought into subjection to the life. In spite of many weaknesses, *the method works* in a way that few who have not tried it would imagine to be possible. We believe that, at its best (and it is not always at its best), it brings us back to something like the free inspiration of the early Church, which was the fellowship of an inspired people.

Psychology helps us to explain why. As Mr. Hepher has shown, in his books *The Fellowship of Silence* and *The Fruits of Silence*, there is a power in silent fellowship

before God to bring persons into subconscious contact and intimacy with one another and with Him ; it does tend to subdue variant human wills to the Divine will, and to open the channels through which God can reach men's souls. It provides the opportunity through which He can ' speak to the condition ' of those who are gathered, either directly, or through the instrumentality of dedicated lips. In my own experience I have known times when words of ministry have been spoken, as if direct to my own soul's deepest needs, by persons who had no ordinary means of knowing my state of mind, to whom perhaps I was personally unknown.

We do not, of course, for a moment suggest that *real* worship ' in spirit and in truth ' cannot be offered to God in other ways. What we claim, and what we wish to share with others, is experience that it can be offered in this way—that it does tend to the spiritual uplifting of the gathered company, and that it is, therefore, acceptable to the Father in heaven. I have dealt with it first on the ground of expediency, since this is the point at which it seems most open to objection ; but we believe that in principle the method of a lay ministry, open to all true followers of Christ without regard to sex or learning, is in accordance with His instruction to His disciples that they were not to call one another ' Rabbi ', and with the ' priesthood of all believers ' which we find taught in the New Testament.

Closely connected with our method of worship is that of conducting the affairs of the Church. Our ' meetings for business ' are begun with a time of quiet waiting on God, that His will may be known and done ; and no vote is ever taken. All members, women equally with men, have a right to be present and take part. The chairman, or ' clerk ', arranges the business and puts to the meeting the various matters that have to be decided. The members express their judgement, and he decides the issue by what he takes to be ' the sense of the meeting '. This he embodies in a minute, which is read, and which may be criticized or objected to. Very rarely is his decision challenged, though the wording of the minute is often altered. In this way anything like party spirit is avoided,

and those who wished for a different decision usually accept with grace the judgement of the meeting. If the difference of view is acute, and opinion seems almost equally divided, it frequently happens that some one asks for a time of quiet prayer that the will of God may be known. After this it is often found that some way out of the difficulty presents itself, in which all can unite; or, if not, the matter is postponed and no decision is taken. The method may be thought slow and cumbrous, but it does succeed, sometimes in a very wonderful way, in harmonizing conflicting views, and in yielding a sense of *corporate* guidance which transcends, though it in no way abrogates, the guidance of the individual.

(b) Our *disuse of the outward Sacraments* is shocking to some of our fellow-Christians, as it seems to them disobedience to what they suppose to be plain commands of our Lord. The founders of our body had so strong a conviction of the inwardness and spirituality of His religion that it seemed to them certain that He could never have intended to establish any outward ceremonies. The 'words of institution' they therefore explained away. Their exegesis may have been wrong, and probably was so; but it is remarkable that these very passages (Matt. xxviii. 19, 'baptizing,' and Luke xxii. 19, 'this do') are among the first passages whose genuineness is questioned by the modern historical study of the New Testament. There can be little doubt, I think, that the words as we have them owe something of their form to ecclesiastical influences later than the first century. But the real Quaker position in regard to Sacraments is not negative, but positive; our thought is that those who know the substance can dispense with the shadow. As early as 1656 Fox wrote:

'God set up in the Church one faith, which Christ was the author of; and one baptism, which was that of the Spirit, into the one body. . . . Eat the bread which comes down from above, which is not outward bread; and drink the cup of salvation which He gives in His kingdom, which is not outward wine.' (*Journal*, i. 340, 342.)

We are all Sacramentalists if we have any sense of poetry and symbolism, any power of reaching spiritual truth through the senses, any appreciation of the parables of Jesus. But we Friends see no reason why the number of Sacraments should be two, or seven, or thirty. Every right act may become a true sacrament if we have eyes to see and hearts to learn.

It is obvious that for a body that has no humanly ordained ministry, and no outward sacraments whose 'validity' can be questioned, many of the problems which divide Christians from one another, often it seems beyond hope of reconciliation, can never arise at all.

(c) Passing now to *the expression of the inward life in practice*, it should be noted that for the early Quakers obedience to the Light meant reality, truthfulness, sincerity, and simplicity. Hence they were taught to practise truth in speech and honesty in business. They were the first to adopt a practice that has now become universal—to place a definite price upon goods sold in shops.¹ The Friends have always objected to judicial oaths—partly because they believed them to have been explicitly forbidden by Jesus, but also because the oath appeared to them to imply a double standard of truthfulness—one for ordinary life and another for courts of justice. They could not adopt a mode of speech which implied that their bare word was not enough.

Further, the conviction that the Light was (potentially at least, as has been said above) present in the souls of all men, gave to human personality a new dignity. The sense of the worth of man *as man* is due, indeed, most of all to the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ. But many of His true followers have not seen its applications; and it needed the powerful reinforcement which it received from belief in a Universal Light. The direct consequence of this reinforcement was *Philanthropy*—in its true sense of the love of man. The Quakers very early felt that everything which oppressed and degraded humanity was wrong and must be removed. In the earliest days of his public ministry George Fox pleaded

¹ For proofs of this see *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, by William C. Braithwaite, pp. 152, 211, 523.

with the magistrates at Mansfield to fix at least a 'living wage' for the labourers in the district. In Cornwall he issued a public protest against the wicked practice of 'wrecking' ships and plundering their cargoes. He appealed to the authorities concerning the cruelties of the penal code and the prison system of that day; and warned the public against the misuse of intoxicating drink.

In the matter of *Slavery*, when Fox was in the West Indies, he wrote to slave-owners to train their 'blacks' in Christianity, and to free them as soon as possible. He does not appear to have seen that Slavery in itself is wrong; but some of his followers very soon did so, and suffered for saying what they thought. A century after Fox's time, when the practice of slave-holding had become common, a Quaker tailor from New Jersey, John Woolman, regained (it seems by inward intuition) the conviction of the sinfulness of the practice, and by his faithfulness, humanity, and loving tenderness brought the great bulk of the Quakers in America to share it. The Society has the honour of having been the first Christian body in that country to make membership incompatible with the holding of slaves.

The *Testimony against War*, which carried with it the refusal to take up arms at the bidding of the Government, arose very early in the Quaker movement; it was, in fact, common to them with many of the Christian mystics to whom they were spiritually allied. When George Fox, about 1650, was offered a captaincy in the Parliamentary army, he refused. He says:

'I told them I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lust, according to James's doctrine; and that I *lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.*' (*Journal*, i, p. 68.)

He nowhere, I think, explicitly connects this refusal to fight with belief in the Light within, and he seems to have been in no hurry, when soldiers joined his movement, to persuade them that their calling was inconsistent with their Christianity. He was content to let them learn for

themselves ; and most of the soldiers who became Quakers either left the army or were dismissed.¹ Nevertheless it can, I think, be shown that the Quaker view of War was a direct consequence of belief in the Light. In the first place, belief in Universal Light meant that all men were *brothers*, and no man who held it could consent to kill his brethren. Secondly, the Light was felt to be the Light of *Christ*, who was reproducing in His followers His own character and way of life. As He conquered evil, not by force but by the way of the Cross, which was love to the uttermost, so must they. And, thirdly, it was held that implicit obedience was due to *Christ alone*, and to His Light in the soul, and that therefore such absolute obedience could not be promised to any human authority : military discipline would not square with allegiance to Christ. I will deal rather later with the test of our principles that the great War brought with it.

In the matter of *Politics* the early Quakers took a line of their own, differing from that of most of the mystical sects with which they were allied. They did not regard the work of Government as an unclean thing with which the Christian had no concern. In 1656 a 'general meeting' held at Skipton, in Yorkshire, advised the adherents of the body (among other things) to undertake with cheerfulness and discharge with faithfulness 'any public service which is for the public wealth and good'. In this country the Test Act and other laws, coupled with their refusal to take an oath, gave them little opportunity for such service ; but in some of the American Colonies, especially Rhode Island, Carolina, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, they were for many years actively engaged as members of the various governments. Their chief difficulty was that of armed defence. Two of their central principles seemed to be in conflict. On the one hand, as Quakers they could not prepare to fight ; on the other, they believed in Freedom of Conscience, and could not force their opinions on others who did not share them.

¹ Colonel Daniel wrote to General Monk, concerning a Quaker Captain in his army, 'I am afraid lest by the spreading of these humours the public suffer, for they [the Quakers] are a very uncertain generation to execute commands.' (*Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 520.)

Their usual solution was, not to retire from the work of Government, but to do what they could with a clear conscience, leaving preparations for defence to be made by others.

The greatest example of Quaker statesmanship is the government of the Colony of Pennsylvania, which was founded by William Penn in 1682, and was managed by an Assembly in which, till 1756, the Quakers were almost always in a majority, though they had soon become a minority of the population. The outstanding triumph they won was with the Indian tribes who were dispossessed. These Indians, Penn and his friends always strove to treat with the utmost justice and friendliness, paying them for the land taken, and treating them like human beings. For over seventy years, while other Colonies, armed for defence against the Indians, were suffering from frequent raids and massacres, Pennsylvania, with no armed defence whatever, was never once attacked: the Indians had become firm friends of the colonists. In 1756 the renewal of war with France led to the compulsory arming of the Colony, and the Quakers retired from office. From that time it became a part of the good order of the Society, in England as well as in America, that Friends should not concern themselves with politics. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the action of public-spirited Friends, like John Bright and Joseph Sturge of Birmingham, began to break down the fences that had been set up, and at present such fences no longer exist.

The abstention from politics, which has been just alluded to, was one aspect of the *Quietism* that settled down over the Society of Friends during the eighteenth and a part of the nineteenth century. The early enthusiasm to spread the Light, the urgent sense of a mission to all the world, had given place to a self-centred vision and the desire to keep the Society pure from defilement.

A great change was wrought by *the Evangelical Revival*, which was late in affecting a Society that kept itself so much within its own shell. The new influence came largely through the association of leading Quakers with Wilberforce, Clarkson, and other Evangelical Church-

men in the agitation against Slavery. In the end it wholly altered the face of Quakerism in England and Ireland, and still more in great parts of America. Quietism and rigidity and the self-concern of the Society were broken down, and a sense of the needs of the world was again aroused. The notable Adult School movement, which began with the Society of Friends, is one result, and another is our share in the work of Foreign Missions. At the present time about one in two hundred of our members is engaged in mission work abroad—in one or other of six fields, which include parts of India and China.

But this new zeal for service was accompanied by a certain loss of belief in the Light within, which had been the original centre and impulse of the Quaker movement. Later on, a more *intellectual* awakening brought many Friends, both in this country and in the eastern parts of America, back towards the early Quaker position, but with a greater breadth of view. The thought of the Light within as in conflict with human Reason gave place to a sounder conception. The need for religious teaching was strongly felt, especially in a body having no separated class of ministers. 'Summer Schools' for Biblical and religious study were freely held, at which teaching on such subjects was given, often by scholars from other religious bodies. Week-end 'Lecture Schools', and addresses of a teaching character on Sunday evenings, became common. A permanent 'Settlement', or college for both sexes, was opened at Woodbrooke near Birmingham in 1903. It is a place where in a warm Christian atmosphere the problems of Biblical and religious history, and of society both international and economic, are handled with much freedom.

The outlook of the Society of Friends at the present time, in spite of its small numbers, is one of hope. *The Great War* brought its principles to the test as nothing else in its history had ever done, at least since the days of persecution passed away. Some of our members thought their duty to the country required them to join the army; others, shunning combatant service, though not its perils, joined the R.A.M.C. The Friends' Ambulance Unit was very early formed to open a field of

service for those who wished to be clear of military discipline. The War Victims Relief Committee was established, at first for work in France and Belgium—directed especially to the relief and sustenance of non-combatant victims of the war. And the Emergency Committee, for the assistance of alien enemies in this country, strove to mitigate the hardships endured by interned Austrians and Germans, and especially by their families. The work of this Committee had a great effect in Germany, where a sister committee was established, largely through the efforts of Dr. Elizabeth Rotten, for the help of British civilians in Germany and their dependents.

This may serve to show that we desire to maintain our 'testimony for Peace' in a more than negative way; to uphold it by deeds of service, to 'foes' as well as friends, that may help to break down antagonisms, foster friendship, and destroy the spirit that leads to war.

When the Conscription Acts were introduced and passed, the test of our principles became more severe. Many of our members for conscientious reasons refused to serve, and we did our best to support others who held similar principles, whether on religious or on humanitarian grounds. Some declined all alternatives to military service, and as 'absolutists' endured long periods of imprisonment. A few were sent to France and, refusing service there, were sentenced to death—the penalty being commuted to ten years' imprisonment, which was afterwards reduced. Others were allowed by the Tribunals to take up such alternative service as their conscience permitted—to work for the War Victims or the Emergency Committee, or the Friends' Ambulance Unit, or to do 'work of national importance' of various kinds.

After the Armistice the way was soon opened for help to sufferers in Austria, Germany, and Poland. Russia had also been assisted until this work was stopped by the second revolution. This, like the earlier work in France, was shared by Friends in America. Towards the end of the year 1919 the American Friends' Service Committee was requested by Mr. Hoover to organize the feeding of children in Germany on a large scale. This work has

been conducted with great efficiency, more than half a million children having received food in the German cities during 1920, and probably twice that number through part of the present year (1921). This labour of love is now drawing to a close.

Our work, then, has been to assist in healing some of the grievous wounds of humanity, especially those inflicted by war. And this has opened to us in a remarkable way a field for spiritual service as well. It has been found that there is a deep hunger for spiritual religion, not only in the countries suffering from war, but also in far-off China and Japan; and the call is urgent to offer such help as we can to the many who mistrust official Christianity, and feel that it has largely failed, yet need a religion to live by. There are 'Seekers' in many lands to-day, as there were in the days of Fox, and it is for these that we seem to have a special message. But unfortunately we are far too few, and much too weak, to respond to the call as we would. Our call and service for humanity would seem to be to reach and quicken to life the 'Seed of God' in men everywhere, and the little we have been able to do shows that this is not a vain endeavour.

We also believe, as was hinted at the outset of this lecture, that we have a contribution to offer towards the Reunion of Christendom. On the Foreign Mission field, in Madagascar and to some extent in China, our missionaries have been able to win from other Churches the recognition of their converts as Christians, though they have never been baptized with water and do not take the outward Communion. Thus a broader basis for Reunion is laid than that contemplated by the Bishops at Lambeth, in their 'Appeal to all Christian people'. They say

'We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, *and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity*, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body.' (Report, p. 26.)

We Friends believe that we are rendering a real service to Reunion by standing firm to our convictions, and not

giving way for the sake of a superficial uniformity. We are not erecting barriers ourselves; we are trying to prevent barriers from being erected where we are sure there should be none. But we recognize with humility and contrition that we shall only succeed in this if we can convince our fellow-Christians by the evidence of facts that, though we deny the forms which they think needful, we are not strangers to the substance that lies beneath them; that to us, as well as to others, in spite of weakness and unworthiness, the grace of the Spirit has been given—just as in the days of the early Church it was given to Gentiles like Cornelius, whom some Christians, laying stress on outward forms, would have excluded from the Body of Christ.

By questions after the Lecture some points were elicited which it has not been easy to embody in the foregoing remarks, and which may here be summarized.

In regard to books dealing with the Society of Friends, by far the most full and authoritative study of its history and principles is to be found in the Rowntree series of seven volumes written by Dr. Rufus M. Jones and William C. Braithwaite, and published by Macmillan. This series was projected by the late John Wilhelm Rowntree, whose early death prevented him from writing it himself. It includes :

Studies in Mystical Religion, Spiritual Reformers of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, and *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, by Dr. R. M. Jones; *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, and *The Second Period of Quakerism*, by W. C. Braithwaite; and *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (two volumes), by Dr. R. M. Jones.

Among other books I may perhaps mention three small ones of my own—*What is Quakerism? Authority and the Light Within*, and *The Historic and the Inward Christ*. These, as well as the Rowntree volumes, may be obtained from the Friends' Book Shop, 140 Bishopsgate, London, E.C. 2, which will also supply a full list of recent Quaker publications.

The mode of worship which I have indicated above is practised almost universally in this country, in Ireland,

and among the more conservative branches in America, at least on Sunday mornings. There is no arrangement for collective 'praise' by the singing of hymns, though praise and thanksgiving are often expressed in vocal prayer. Our disuse of congregational singing is due to the fear of solemn words being used with unreality by persons whose condition they do not express; and also to the feeling that, if it is to be done well, it requires so much arrangement that it is in danger of becoming a performance. For Sunday evenings, however, many of our meetings have adopted modified methods—partly with the desire to reach a wider public with an evangelistic message, and partly to supply religious teaching to our own members and to others. Hymns are very generally sung, and frequently an address of an evangelistic or instructive character is arranged for. But there are usually periods of silent worship with freedom for any who feel called to do so to speak or offer vocal prayer.

The number of members of the Society of Friends in Great Britain is about 20,000. There are some 2,000 in Ireland, and probably 120,000 in the United States and Canada. In those countries they are divided into three or four different branches; in this country no separation of importance has occurred. The number in this country increased slowly from about 1860, when it was at its lowest, till the war. Since 1914 there has been a very slight loss of members, mainly owing, I believe, to the withdrawal of some who were unable to hold the peace principles of the Society. As the losses by death normally exceed the gains by birth, the numbers are maintained chiefly by the 'convincement' of others.

Admission into the Society is by application to 'the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting'. Any one who has attended our meetings for worship for a time, and finds them spiritually helpful (all such meetings are open to the public, who are warmly invited to attend them), is encouraged to apply for membership. The application is read at the Monthly Meeting, and two Friends are appointed to see the applicant and to ascertain how far he or she is a true follower of Christ and understands and accepts the main principles for which the Society stands.

They report at the next Monthly Meeting, which decides whether to accept the application or to postpone the matter till the applicant has further opportunity of learning what the Society is. Only under exceptional circumstances would applications for membership be refused, provided the applicant is felt to be sincere.

Resignations of membership are also received and considered by the Monthly Meeting. If a person no longer shows any interest in the Society, his or her name may be removed from the list of members. 'Disownment' of members is rare, and is confined to cases of disgraceful conduct, after careful dealing with the offender.

'Birthright membership' prevails in this country, and among some of the branches in America. That is to say, children born to Friends, if both parents are members, are entered on the list. At our last Yearly Meeting it was decided that when one parent only is a member the same course should be taken when there is evidence that the child will be brought up as a Friend. We have nothing corresponding either to infant Baptism, or to adult Baptism, or to Confirmation. Some of us think it might be an advantage to have some simple form for the dedication of a child to God by its parents, in the presence of the Church, and also for the self-dedication of a young man or woman whose mind is made up to follow Christ. But we do not find that we are more heavily burdened with 'nominal members' than other Churches appear to be. We find that many young Friends as they grow up fall quite naturally into a place of service, and their Christian life develops healthily without any formal profession of 'conversion'.

As to Church organization, the unit of authority is the 'Monthly Meeting', which consists of a number of contiguous congregations. This meeting has power to deal with the members, and appoints its own officers. The officers are the 'Overseers', who care for the poorer members, attend to the education of children, and deal with any whose conduct is unsatisfactory; and the 'Elders', whose main function is to foster the spiritual life of the congregations, and especially to care for the vocal ministry. We have no official 'ministers', but those

who speak frequently and acceptably in meetings for worship often have their gifts 'acknowledged' or 'recorded' by the Monthly Meeting. This practice is now tending to lapse in some districts, and no harm appears to result from its disuse. Many Friends now hold that to 'record' ministers tends to lessen the sense of responsibility for vocal ministry among the members as a whole.

Monthly Meetings are grouped in 'Quarterly Meetings', whose areas include one or more counties, and these again in the 'Yearly Meeting', which is the legislative body and the only one that can alter the discipline of the Society. This organization was devised by George Fox, and has remained almost unaltered. It seems to combine harmoniously local autonomy and central unifying control. Every member, man or woman, has a right to attend and speak in any of these meetings. Ireland has its own 'Yearly Meeting'; and in America, owing to the wide extent of the country, there are numerous Yearly Meetings of each of the three main branches. In each branch the Yearly Meetings are connected by correspondence in a sort of loose federation. In the largest branch, which is 'orthodox' and evangelical, and has set up a system of pastors to some extent, assimilating its methods of worship to those of other Nonconformist bodies, thirteen Yearly Meetings are united in a 'Five Years' Meeting', which has adopted a uniform Discipline. (There is at present some disposition among these Friends to return to more Quakerly methods of worship.)

In the matter of Marriage the Society in this country, and in the more conservative bodies in America, has its own procedure, which is very different from that of other churches. From the first Friends were not willing to recognize the power of any 'priest' to declare a man and woman husband and wife. For some years they suffered patiently the penalties of illegality, but as early as 1661 their methods were allowed by law. Every effort was made to carry through the ceremony with order and publicity. After certain formalities are gone through with the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting and the Overseers, a public meeting for worship (on a week-day) is appointed, at which the parties assemble with their friends and others.

After a time of silent worship they rise, take each other by the hand, and repeat a simple form of words saying that they take each other as husband and wife, promising as such to be 'loving and faithful until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us'. (No woman in the Society of Friends has ever promised to be 'obedient'.) Then the registering officer of the Monthly Meeting reads the marriage certificate, which is signed by the parties and by some of their relatives as witnesses, and there is a further period of quiet worship, with opportunity for vocal prayer or speaking in ministry. When the ceremony is over the legal documents are signed, and opportunity is given for any of those present at the meeting to sign the certificate as witnesses. The method has been devised to secure not only publicity and the non-recognition of any 'priestly' function, but absolute equality between man and woman. The importance and the solemnity of marriage have always been emphasized by Friends, and I think there is little doubt that the proportion of unsatisfactory marriages is lower than among the population generally. Divorce is almost an unknown thing among us.

VI

THE BAPTISTS

By Rev. P. T. THOMSON, M.A.

I AM absolved from the necessity of expounding one important aspect of the reason for the existence of Baptist churches by the fact that Dr. Garvie has already on a former evening preceded me with an exposition of Congregationalism. In polity Baptist churches are congregational, and, for the reason stated, that branch of my subject need not detain us to-night. I doubt not that what you desiderate from a Baptist is some sort of explanation of what to many sober-minded Englishmen appears almost whimsical, viz. his teaching and practice relative to the ordinance of Christian Baptism. It is a misfortune that we are called Baptists, which I fear, to begin with, was a nickname, inasmuch as it singled out the particular rather than emphasized the general in our interpretation of the Christian faith. In consequence it has seemed to many that our denominational pyramid is poised on its apex rather than securely laid on its base. The usual comment is that we make too much of Baptism, while by others we are taxed with making too little of it. In either case, stress is laid on our observance of the rite as constituting the differentium of our position, and whether we Baptists like it or not that our endeavour to subordinate the rite to the truth which it symbolizes should have earned us a name suggestive of according primacy to the rite rather than to the truth, the most direct approach to a consideration of what the Baptist Church stands for does seem to lie in expounding the Baptist view of Christian Baptism.

Let us make a beginning with two quotations from Sanday and Headlam's great commentary on the Epistle

to the Romans. We shall take first the paraphrase of Rom. vi. 3, 4. It runs thus :

‘ Surely you do not need reminding that all of us who were immersed or baptized “into Christ”, i. e. into the closest allegiance and adhesion to Him, were so immersed or baptized into a special relation to His *Death*. I mean that the Christian, at his baptism, not only professes obedience to Christ but enters into a relation to Him so intimate that it may be described as actual union. Now this union, taken in connexion with the peculiar symbolism of Baptism, implies a great deal more. That symbolism recalls to us with great vividness the redeeming acts of Christ—His *Death*, *Burial*, and *Resurrection*. And our union with Christ involves that we shall repeat those acts, in such sense as we may, i. e. in a moral and spiritual sense in our own persons.

‘ When we descended into the baptismal water, that meant that we died with Christ—to sin. When the water closed over our heads, that meant that we lay buried with Him, in proof that our death to sin, like His death, was real. As Christ was raised from among the dead by a majestic exercise of Divine power, so we also must from henceforth conduct ourselves as men in whom has been implanted a new principle of life.’

Thus far the extended paraphrase of St. Paul’s account of the significance of Baptism. Take one other quotation from an appended Excursus on the doctrine of Mystical Union with Christ. Say the writers :

‘ St. Paul’s thoughts were so concentrated upon the culminating acts in the Life of Christ—the acts which were in a special sense associated with man’s redemption—His *Death*, *Burial* and *Resurrection*—that when he came to analyse his own feelings and to dissect the idea of oneness, it was natural to see in it certain stages corresponding to those great acts of Christ, to see in it something corresponding to death, something corresponding to burial, and something corresponding to resurrection.

‘ Here there came in to help the peculiar symbolism

of Baptism. An imagination as lively as St. Paul's soon found in it analogies to the same process. That plunge beneath the running waters was like a death ; the moment's pause while they swept on overhead was like a burial : the standing erect once more in air and sunlight was a species of resurrection. Nor did the likeness reside only in the outward rite, it extended to its inner significance. To what was it the Christian died ? He died to his old self, to all that he had been before he became a Christian. To what did he rise again. Clearly to that new life to which the Christian was bound over. And in this spiritual death and resurrection the great moving factor was that one fundamental principle of union with Christ, identification of will with His. It was this which enabled the Christian to make his parting with the past and embracing of new obligations real.'

I have adduced these passages from this exposition of the classical Pauline text on Baptism because, in the first place, neither the scholarship nor the impartiality of Sanday and Headlam can for a moment be in question, and, in the next place, because implicit in them is the rationale of the Baptist witness. They suggest the closest possible correspondence between the form of the symbol and the truth symbolized. Encased in the rite, like a jewel in its casket, lies the central truth of Christianity that Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification. Baptism as St. Paul viewed it was a constantly re-enacted Parable of the facts of the Gospel. It was a picture which was given to the Church to paint again and again in colours drawn from the penitence, the faith, the obedience of a constant stream of witnesses, and every time the picture flashed up afresh in the living hues of a soul's surrender to its Lord, it disclosed a Cross and an Empty Tomb. Every Baptism exhibited Atonement and Resurrection as the historic facts of the Gospel, and their counterparts of Cleansing and Renewal as the experienced realities of the believer. In its very form it made it impossible for the Christian recruit to overlook the ground of his

Christian hope in that Christ died and rose again, or the obligation imposed by his Christian calling to walk in newness of life.

Baptism, therefore, has an expository significance, and that of the central truths of Christianity. It is concerned with the very heart of the Gospel. It would seem as if its divine intention were to recall men's minds again and again to the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Every believer was asked, in his own person, to supply a reminder to man's fickle memory of the tragedy-triumph on Calvary and of the empty Arimathean grave. It put the creed in a picture : it showed the foundations of our faith in a sublime gesture. Moreover, it safeguarded the ethical values of Christianity. By the insistence on baptism as a sequel to faith and penitence it bestowed the privilege of showing forth the Lord's death and resurrection only upon those whose experience had verified these primary facts in their own hearts and lives. It insisted on the elementary truth that the exponent and vindicator of Christianity must be a Christian. It forbade witness to Christ save on the part of those who were in the position to testify of that which they had heard, which they had seen with their eyes, which their hands had handled concerning the Word of Life. In this way it guaranteed the moral character of Christianity. It affirmed that no one can be made a Christian without the co-operation of his own will.

The bearing of this fundamental position on the constitution of Christ's Church is clear. An ethical and spiritual standard of membership is *ipso facto* erected in Baptism. By their view of Baptism, Baptists are forced to the conclusion that admission to the Church is impossible without a profession of faith in Christ, and the sense of moral responsibility is made secure. This paves the way for a constitution of the Church along the lines of a Christian democracy, for a Church in which is recognized the priesthood of every believer becomes automatically self-governing. In the triangular controversy waged between the Episcopal, Puritan, and Independent protagonists of the seventeenth century on the

nature and constitution of the Church there was no logical ground in the middle position occupied by the Puritans, for either the Church is constituted by the admission of all or by the admission only of believers. If the former, the case is very strong for an episcopally-controlled Church. But, inasmuch as Baptists, by their interpretation of the rite, insisted upon the necessity of faith and penitence as conditions of admission to the Church, it followed that they found the constitution of the Church not in Episcopacy, but in the universal priesthood of believers, and in an equal priesthood there is no gradation of authority or control. Similarly, their doctrine of Baptism forbade a national establishment of religion. It prohibits the view of the Church as co-extensive with the nation, and, in doing so, claims exemption from the pressure of the State as representing a Divine and yet a lower authority, and therefore without power to interfere or dictate in matters of faith. It claims the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free as a liberty of conscience and as an indefeasible right to worship God after its own lights. It draws sharply the dividing line between the Church and the world, and though the danger here lies in the cultivation of an unlowly temper, the risk has to be faced in the interests of spiritual and autonomous Christian experience. It believes that the Church is an entirely spiritual institution—that it depends on a supernatural power for its existence, and that its membership is only constituted by a personal experience of God. The risk here, as I have suggested, is of intolerance and spiritual pride, but not less are the dangers threatening us from the other side of unspirituality, and a religion from which the saving salt of ethical value has departed. The contribution of Baptists to the idea of the Church is the insistence on the necessity of faith and changed character to qualify for membership in Christ's Church.

The reaction of Baptism on the individual himself is another aspect of the matter that deserves some consideration. The value of an ordinance depends ultimately upon its effects in the life of the subject of it, and applying this test we can see the reasonableness of the Pauline

account of the rite. In St. Paul's view the fact of Baptism is a challenge : it supplies a continuous motive to the earnest cultivation of the Christian life in all its consequences. To be this, of course, it seems reasonable to infer that it must have been in some sense the man's own act, that it must represent his deliberate choice, and be a kind of registration of the most solemn decision he can possibly make. It must represent to him, not in retrospect, but in the very hour of Baptism, the assent yielded by his mind and spirit to the great fact of God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord ; it is the signature that he appends to the Divine affidavit of pardon and renewal. It represents an act of clear apprehension on his part of the soul's relation to God, and of how, in the soul's deep and utter need, the Divine Love has not been wanting. It pictures forth what God has done for him. It lifts his religion out of the region of what is entirely subjective and exhibits to him the Fact of Atonement, and sets his feet upon the rock of something august and unshakable wrought by God. And in the very moment of the soul's apprehension of what God has done, it too acts. By the exercise of conscience and reason the human will is identified with the Divine. He is buried with Christ : he rises with Him to newness of life. In the ordinance, not only is the Divine will seen to be active : the human will acts also. Religion is seen to be not only a grace conferred, but a good to be diligently ensued with all the powers of an awakened manhood. The fundamental use of religion is in the manhood it creates. Judged by this test, we cannot lightly pass over the moral and spiritual reactions of Baptism on the believer. It is ' a call to individuality and thoroughness in religion '. His self-devotion in Baptism, if it be sincere, cannot but be decisive on his whole outlook and conduct. It not only expresses the experience of the moment, it gives the most solemn pledges for the future. It guarantees the effort to attain complete and consecrated manhood in Christ. Nothing can be more decisive than his act in Baptism, and if the future witnesses declension so much the sadder will be so great apostasy. The fall is measured by the height. But, on the other hand, no reinforcement

surely can be greater to one who has set his affections on things above than to recall the step he once took, and the vows it implied. There is no greater aid to being decided than decision.

It may occur to some that all this is too intensely individualistic. But it would be wrong to assume that this is all, or that Baptists have been indifferent to the social and catholic implications of their faith and practice. Baptism, as I have suggested, is the symbol of identification of the will of the disciple with the will of his Lord. If that has any meaning at all it means that the life that was centred in self is now centred in Christ. It means sharing His outlook on the world, His purposes for the kingdom of God, His sense of oneness with humanity, His catholic ideal of brotherhood. It has to be confessed that some expositions of the doctrine of Believer's Baptism have borne the mark of an intense egotism, but that is due to an imperfect presentation of it. Rightly apprehended, it should react on the spirit, not in fostering intolerance but a larger charity, not in making for insularity but for a freer and more compassionating temper. For it is nothing if it is not penetrated by the mind of Christ, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. Any one who has realized to the full the significance of the act of identification with Him expressed in Baptism will find therein the safeguard against cherishing any spirit less catholic than His own.

Implicit in all that I have said is the obvious fact that this view of Baptism is only compatible with an evangelical interpretation of Christian doctrine. Baptists perforce are evangelical. In virtue of the fact that they find the meaning of Baptism in the facts of the Gospel as they emerge in the experience of the individual, they cannot but view the Christian system from the centre which Baptism supplies. The atoning efficacy of the death of Christ, the necessity of inner change, individual freedom and responsibility, the work of Divine Grace in renewing the heart, are enshrined in the symbolism of the rite. A convinced Baptist must be a convinced evangelical, inasmuch as the ordinance, as he understands it,

exhibits the redemptive force of Christianity whether as it has appeared objectively in the historic Christ, or subjectively in his own experience of an ever-living Saviour. From this point of view it might seem as if the cardinal facts of the Gospel, whether as history or as experience, had been entrenched in the rite, that in other words the Divine intention was, by means of it, not only to illustrate and enforce, but also to preserve the faith once delivered to the saints. Certain it is that of whatever other heresy or heresies a Baptist may be guilty, he can hardly be charged with lack of fidelity to the essential truths of the Atonement and Resurrection. To forswear either or both of these central facts of the Gospel would carry with it the forswearing of an ordinance which would for him become meaningless, if he ceased to believe in Him, who brought from the dead the Shepherd of the Sheep by the blood of the everlasting covenant. It could only be by the obscuration of faith in that supreme fact that the significance of Baptism would evaporate. For, throughout, its meaning is subordinate to and dependent upon the values the believer attaches to the Ministry of Reconciliation in Christ.

So, if I were asked what Baptists stand for, my answer in few words would be this: They stand for the Gospel of God's Grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. They stand for a Love which, through the Cross, redeems and saves the sinful. They stand for a Spirit of Power that renews the spiritual energies of the soul and enables it to live the life risen with Christ. They stand for a spiritual interpretation of Christianity and therefore a spiritual membership of the Christian Church. They stand for the freedom of the single soul and the directness of his access to God and the indefeasible rights of his independent spiritual manhood. They stand for ethical religion, measuring it by personal rather than communal holiness. They stand for the union which organic relation to Christ gives to all who love Him in sincerity and in truth. They stand for ideals of pity and service imbibed from union with Him who though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor. They stand for 'a salvation which is spiritual or it is nothing': for 'a spiritual

order of manhood and a kingdom whose laws, and motives, and sanctions are spiritual, based on the inward and direct relation of man to God'. While affirming these high truths, that Baptist would not be true to his own large faith who claimed that in whole or in part they are the exclusive property of Baptists: he would take the safer line, as well as exhibit the more Christ-like spirit, if he ventured no further than to thank God that in view of the many inducements which a worldly spirit or an easy temper offer to decline from his high calling, God should have had regard to his weakness, by vouchsafing him a casket safely to keep the precious deposit of evangelic truth, as well as a shining beacon light to recall him to his vows, in the ordinance of Christian Baptism.

VII

PRESBYTERIANISM

By the Rev. D. C. MACGREGOR, M.A., D.D.
Ex-Moderator of the General Assembly of the
Presbyterian Church of England

THIS parish of Blackheath has long been associated with Christian work and Christian fellowship, but even here you are sensible, I think, how remarkably the Lambeth appeal of last year has warmed the atmosphere for us all. The humility of that appeal, its brotherliness, its wide vision, its unmistakable spiritual power, have made a profound impression. No report of any Church Assembly known to me has ever made on my own mind a deeper impression of having proceeded from men of God, who had sought and found in prayer the guidance of His Holy Spirit. I gratefully acknowledge how helpful I have found the reports and recommendations of the Bishops' various Committees, on such themes as Marriage, Industrial and Social Problems, and the Place of Women in the Church. But specially, of course, it is the report on Re-union which has brought a new spirit into the mutual relations of different branches of Christ's Church. It is this which has brought us together this evening; and in endeavouring briefly to place before you some account of the Presbyterian position, and what the Presbyterian Churches stand for, I desire to follow the example of the Lambeth fathers in their humility and brotherly love.

I. *The Church and its Government.*

In speaking of, or for, any branch of the Catholic Church, our first question naturally is: What do we understand by the Church? how do we define it? May

we begin with a noble sentence which stands in the forefront of the *Lambeth Appeal to all Christian People* (Conference Report, p. 26) :

‘ We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the Name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body.’

To that, I am sure, we shall all heartily subscribe. It affords an interesting parallel to the definitions on the same subject of the *Westminster Confession*, that historic standard of the Presbyterian Churches. Chapter 25 of the Confession (‘ Of the Church ’) distinguishes, like many of the Reformed Confessions, between the Church Visible and the Church Invisible. The latter alone is declared to be, in the full sense, the Body and Fulness of Him that filleth all in all, and it is defined as consisting of ‘ all who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ their Head ’. ‘ The Visible Church ’—the Confession proceeds—‘ which is also catholick or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the Law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children ; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.’ This last clause may at first appear to some a little startling. But a moment’s reflection makes the meaning clear. In the New Testament, as the late Principal Denney used to say, we do not find any unattached believers. Any one who accepts and holds the Head comes thereby into relation with other believers. He ‘ shares in the membership of the Universal Church ’. It is in that sense that the old adage holds—*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*.

As to what the Church is, then, we are justified in assuming substantial agreement. It is when we come to the question of the Church’s organization that our differences begin. In a famous sermon on 1 Cor. iv. 15, preached in 1885 at the consecration of Bishop King, the late Canon Liddon declared the Episcopate to be a condition not merely of the *bene esse*, but of the very

esse, of the Church. On the other side the Presbyterian view has had equally staunch and uncompromising defenders, to whom the sole 'Divine Right of Presbytery' appeared indisputable. Most men, I fancy, would now hesitate, on either side, to make such strong and exclusive claims. Government and organization of the Church are important, but their importance is secondary. They are means to an end, and the end is greater than the means, for it is to bring men to, and build them up in, Christ the Lord.

II. *The Reformation a going-back to the New Testament.*

To explain the Presbyterian position, I must ask you to go back with me for a moment to the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. That vast movement has many aspects, and secular historians have naturally dwelt chiefly upon its political, social, and international aspects in the various countries of Europe. But we cannot rightly understand the Reformation unless we see in it primarily a great spiritual and religious awakening. Luther and his followers broke away from a system of religious torpor and bondage, and they went right back to the New Testament for the freedom they craved. They made root-and-branch work, certainly. From Roman doctrines they went back to New Testament truth; from the spiritual rule which oppressed men's consciences they broke away to claim the 'Liberty of a Christian Man' (the title of Luther's famous booklet), and the priesthood of all believers; finally, from the system of Church Government which culminated in the Papacy, they went back to the simple Church Order of the New Testament. Some will think this was throwing away too much. I am not arguing, at the moment, whether they were right or wrong—merely relating what they did. But thus it came to pass that the great majority of the Reformed Churches—those of France, Geneva, Holland, Hungary, and substantially also the Lutheran Churches of Germany, Denmark, and Scandinavia—were organized on a Presbyterian basis. The one notable exception was the Church of England; and it is well known that even in that great Church not a few in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries favoured the Presbyterian order, and would willingly have fallen into line with their brethren in the Reformed Churches of the Continent and of Scotland.

Presbyterianism has sometimes been spoken of as a novelty originated in the sixteenth century. The Reformers, on the contrary, claimed that, while they rejected a church tradition of many centuries, they did so in order to get back to a more venerable and primitive one. As regards the New Testament itself, modern scholarship generally admits that they were right. Since the publication of Bishop Lightfoot's masterly dissertation on the Christian ministry, in his *Commentary on Philippians* (1868), it has been generally recognized that in the New Testament Church the names *presbyteros* (elder) and *episcopos* (bishop), if not necessarily synonymous, were at least applied to the same persons. Reference to Acts xx. 17, 28 and Titus i. 5, 7 makes this plain; and Bishop Gore, one of the highest living authorities, speaks of 'presbyters or bishops' in that age (*The Christian Ministry*, new edition 1919, p. 239). The separation of the two offices came later. The Apostles, in their great mission of carrying the gospel and founding churches, appear to have simply ordained elders or overseers—for such is the meaning of *episcopos*—wherever they went.

III. *Presbyterianism the Synagogue Order, taken over into the Christian Church.*

When we go back a step farther and ask, Why did they do so? Why 'elders'? a fact of great interest emerges. That fact is that government by elders had already for centuries been known and familiar in the Jewish Synagogue system. Wherever the Apostles went they found the Jewish Church almost invariably had been there before them; its method of organization was ready to their hand, and had been found to work well; why should they experiment with any other? 'That the polity of the Church, in its earlier stages at least, was modelled after that of the synagogue,' says Dr. Litton in his *Bampton Lecture*, p. 246, 'admits of no reasonable doubt.' To the same effect is the view of Archbishop

Whately in his *Kingdom of Christ*: 'It appears possible—I might say, morally certain—that wherever a Jewish synagogue was brought in whole or in chief part to embrace the Gospel, they did not so much form a Christian Church as make an existing congregation Christian by introducing the Christian sacraments, leaving the machinery, if I may so speak, of the government unchanged. And when they found a church in any of those cities in which there was no synagogue, it was likely they would still conform in a great measure to the same model.' The Synagogue system, we can see in the glimpses the New Testament affords of it, was flexible in its adaptation to local or other circumstances. Sometimes there was but one rabbi or 'ruler of the synagogue' (e. g. Luke xiii. 14); in large city synagogues there were several, perhaps many (Mark v. 22, &c.). But government by Elders was the characteristic feature, and so was naturally carried over into the Christian Church.

The institution of the Deaconship—an order whose duties from their nature naturally fell to younger men—is found in Acts vi. The Pastoral Epistles carefully prescribe the qualifications for this as well as for the higher office, which (as we have seen) might be styled either bishop or elder. In the Apostolic Church there was thus almost at once a threefold ministry. First ranked the Apostles and, only a little below them, the Prophets. These were temporary offices, soon passing away. In the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, that remarkable document of primitive Christianity (about A. D. 90–100), the Apostles have disappeared; and though the prophet remains, it is with diminished prestige. The other grades, Presbyter-Bishop and Deacon, because they were permanent, were becoming the real orders of the Church; the ministry of special inspiration had to give place to the ministry of office. It is not part of my task to show how gradually, and very speedily, one of the presbyters came to be given a place of eminence and superiority over the rest, and the name of Bishop to be restricted to him. From the middle of the second century the bishop begins to appear in full possession, and by-and-by is regarded as holding or continuing the apostle's

place. What has been said may suffice to show our grounds for holding, in Dean Stanley's words (*Christian Institutions*), that 'Presbytery was not a later growth out of Episcopacy, but Episcopacy was a later growth out of Presbytery'. In this way arose the three orders of the ministry, as we know them in Church History, and as they exist to-day in the Church of England.

IV. *The Presbyterian Church's Organization.*

The Reformed Churches in the sixteenth century dropped, as we have seen, the diocesan bishop, but they still retained what is in effect a threefold order—Minister, Elder, Deacon. In counsel and in the government of the Church the minister and the lay elder have the same authority; their votes count as equal in Presbytery and Assembly; and they are sometimes spoken of as belonging to the same order, only with a difference of function. But the difference of function involves a difference of ordination. A minister is ordained to his office by a Presbytery—that is, by a group or college of not fewer than three ordained ministers; elders are ordained by a minister only. The minister alone is ordained for the ministration of the Word and Sacraments. Ordinarily, therefore, for the celebration of the Sacraments an ordained minister is necessary, though in an emergency he may empower a 'ruling elder' to preside at the Communion in his place. It is a moot point whether a lay elder may be elected Moderator of the General Assembly, the Church's Supreme Court. One or two such appointments were undoubtedly made in the Church of Scotland in the years immediately following 1560, the year when the Reformation in Scotland was completed under Knox. But the apparently uniform practice since has been the other way; and once or twice, when a change in this respect has been proposed, the strongest opposition to it has come from the elders.

The gradation of Church courts, to which passing reference has been made, is a characteristic feature of the Presbyterian system. The foundation of the system is the *Session* of elders in each congregation; these elders being called directly to their responsible office, as

the seven men in Acts vi were called to the deaconship, by the Christian people whom they represent. From the session any member who feels aggrieved may appeal to the *Presbytery*, which consists of the ministers of all the churches in a certain area, with an elder (in some cases two elders) from each session. From the Presbytery, again—sometimes through an intermediate court, the Synod, which covers a whole province—the appeal lies to the Church's supreme executive and judiciary for a whole country, the *General Assembly*. No system perhaps so combines the freedom and rights of the Church's membership with the authority and regulated order of the Church as a whole. 'Presbyterianism'—in the words of one of its greatest modern representatives, the late Principal Rainy (*Three Lectures on the Church of Scotland*, p. 36)—'meant a system in which every one had his recognized place, his defined position, his ascertained and guarded privileges, and felt himself a part of the great unity, with a right to care for its welfare and to guard its integrity. From the broad base of the believing people the sap rose through Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, to the Assembly; and thence descending diffused knowledge, influence, and organic unity through the whole system.'

How this system of Church Government commended itself at the Reformation epoch to the general body of the Reformed Churches, with the notable exception of England, has been already mentioned. At the present day the Presbyterian Church forms one of the largest component bodies of Protestantism. The Presbyterian Alliance, which a few weeks ago held its most recent gathering at Pittsburgh in America, reported a communicant membership of nearly eight millions, and an estimate of between thirty and forty million adherents. The number of different nations whose Reformed Churches are organized on this model gives to Presbyterianism a peculiarly oecumenical character. It has been a touching reminder of this, that the suffering Reformed Churches of Hungary and Transylvania, in the troubles which their rulers' action in the War has brought upon them during the last two years, have addressed their

special appeal for sympathy and help to the brethren of their own communion throughout the world, especially in Britain and America.

V. *A Branch of the Catholic Church.*

A few words may now be said on the place of the Presbyterian Church as a branch of the Catholic Church. We have already noted how firmly the Reformation fathers maintained their claim to the Church's catholic heritage in its entirety. They did not leave the Church, though forced to sever communion with Rome. The Catholic creeds, and the faith expressed in them, were theirs as surely as ever. The Apostles' Creed long remained in regular use in the services of the church in Scotland. The extreme Puritan protest against the use of any kind of forms in worship led to its abandonment; Robert Baillie, in his graphic letters from the Westminster Assembly (1643-7), tells of those who 'scunnered' (objected to) both 'the Lord's Prayer and the Belief'. The Westminster Assembly, however, disregarded the objectors, and printed the Creed at the close of the Shorter Catechism, justifying its doing so on the ground that 'it is a brief sum of the Christian faith, agreeable to the Word of God, and anciently received in the Churches of Christ'.

To education, and not least to theological education and sound learning, the Presbyterian Church has ever given great attention. From John Calvin—a man sometimes ignorantly maligned, but characterized by the great Richard Hooker as 'incomparably the wisest man the French Church ever did enjoy' (Preface, § II)—begins a noble succession of great Reformed divines. In England, Scotland, France, and America, Presbyterians are among the soundest and most influential theological writers to-day. A curious temporary exception in England must be referred to in passing. During the eighteenth century a considerable portion of the Presbyterians remaining in England came to adopt Unitarian views; and many of the successors of these still retain the name, along with meeting-houses (and in some cases endowments) originally destined for the teaching of

doctrine of a different character. Once or twice I have had personal experience of the confusion caused by this use of a good old name in a perverted sense, and have been obliged to vindicate my own Church against the suspicion of Socinianism. The Churches in the Presbyterian Alliance, it scarcely need be said, are without exception Evangelical, and absolutely loyal to the Catholic faith.

An outstanding feature of the Reformed Churches is their doctrine of the Sacraments. According to the full and careful definition in the Shorter Catechism (Q. 92), a Sacrament is 'an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers'. Sacraments are thus not only symbols which represent God's gifts and seals which confirm His promises, but also means of grace, wherein, by faith, Christ and His benefits are truly and indeed received. The answer to Question 96 affirms this still more plainly regarding the Lord's Supper: 'The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His Death is showed forth; and *the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner but by faith, made partakers of His Body and Blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.*' The words in italics express the great truth of the Lord's special Presence in the Supper with His own. Zwingle, who is generally supposed to have made the Supper a commemoration only, and who certainly emphasized the commemorative aspect of the Feast in opposition to the sacrifice which the Roman Church found in it, would probably (as one gathers from the somewhat scattered expressions of his views) have accepted this. It is the clear teaching of the New Testament in 1 Cor. x. 16. It is the doctrine of the Twenty-eighth Article of the Church of England, and no student of Hooker will forget the exquisite passage in the fifth book of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

'What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not,

it is enough that to me which take them they are the Body and Blood of Christ. His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, His Word He knoweth which way to accomplish ; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this—" O my God, Thou art true ; O my soul, thou art happy ! " ' "

The Reformed doctrine could not be more nobly expressed than in these words of one of the greatest of Anglican divines.

In bringing this brief sketch to a close, I do not desire to dwell upon the short period during which the Church of England was Presbyterian, under the Parliament, nor upon the close of that period at the unhappy day of St. Bartholomew in 1662. All the Churches have learned or ought to have learned many things, by the teaching of God's Spirit, in these two centuries and a half. The question is, How can we best understand each other, or help one another as brethren, now ? Perhaps the intermediate position of the Presbyterian Church, between the Anglican Church and the other Free Churches, enables it to fill a part of its own in aiding mutual understanding. Our links with the Free Churches are apparent. Our protest, like theirs, on behalf of spiritual religion and the freedom of the Spirit, has often been necessary, and may still be so. With the Church of England, again, the Presbyterian Churches have two curious and not unimportant links which are not always borne in mind. One is that our ordinary parochial or congregational system is so very like, may be said to be virtually *identical with, primitive episcopacy*. The diocesan bishop, students of Church History are pretty well agreed, does not appear until the seventh century or later. In St. Augustine's day, when there were, for instance, as many as two hundred bishops in a not very extensive region of North Africa, the bishop was virtually the minister of a town or parish, presiding over his flock, ordaining his assistant presbyters (elders), and deacons, and admitting catechumens to the Holy Table—just as a Presbyterian minister does to-day. The other point of similarity—again one might call it identity—is in the

manner of ordination. Old ' Rabbi ' Duncan, as he was affectionately called, used to say that on an ordination day all Christendom was Presbyterian. In the Presbyterian rite of Ordination, when the moderator or presiding minister, who offers prayer, lays both hands on the head of the ordinand, the other ministers who take part each impose their right hands also. In the Church of England, in the very same way, the rubric directs that ' the Bishop *with the Priests present* shall lay their hands severally on the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood '.

The general subject of these lectures has been to expound ' What the Churches stand for '. We all, I believe, stand fast for the Catholic Faith, as God enables us to understand it—the faith of Jesus Christ, Very Man and Very God, the One Lord and only Saviour. We differ, sometimes widely, at the circumference ; we come near each other again as we approach the burning Centre. If I am asked what is the special witness or aim of the Churches of the Presbyterian order, I should reply that we endeavour to stand for an Evangelical Creed, a Free and Scriptural Church Polity, and for the thorough training of aspirants for the Holy Ministry, in order to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and the edifying of His Body.

A 060291

To name

ER
744
.W483
1922

What the churches stand for : ..

(C

1. Christian sects--England.
Ecumenical movement--England--Hi
3. Theology, Doctrinal--History--
century. I. Selwyn, Edward Gord
1885-1959.

A060291

CCSC 09 JUN 94 11488909 CSTMxc

